A Summer in Brittany vol.-2

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CONTENTS

OF

THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CHAPTER XLII.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CHAPTER XLIV.





A SUMMER IN BRITANNY.

CHAPTER XXV.

A Breton Tragedy — A Bas-Breton Tailor — Walk to Lancerre — Position of the Stage — Gathering of the Audience — Arrival of the Performers—Their Appearance—And Performance—Curious Particulars concerning the Breton Tragedies.

Of all our excursions from Paimpol, by far the most interesting was an expedition we made to a village, where we had been told that one of the ancient Breton tragedies was about to be performed.

I had heard a great deal of these very curious productions, and I was aware that the custom of acting them, once common and prevalent over the whole of Lower Britanny, was still preserved in the ancient diocese of Treguier. I was extremely desirous of being present at one of these representations; but,

as I understood that they were now become of unfrequent recurrence, and that the custom was altogether extinct, except in one small district, I had hardly any hope of meeting with an opportunity of doing so. Moreover, it was not at all unlikely that if a representation were to take place, it might pass within a few miles of us without our ever hearing a word about it. For the managers, actors, and audience, on these occasions, are the peasants of the villages, and the stage is erected in some secluded spot, out of the way, in all probability, of any town or high road.

Accordingly, it was quite by accident that I heard at Paimpol that a tragedy was going to be acted at Lancerre, a village some miles to the south of the town. Knowing that we were now in the country where, if at all, there was a chance of finding one of these representations, I inquired at the table d'hôte at Paimpol if such things ever still took place, and was delighted to learn from one of the guests that he had heard some peasants in the market say that a tragedy was going to be acted this week.

It remained to learn if possible the day and hour. But this I found some difficulty in doing. The townsfolk of course shew their superior enlightenment by looking down with

supreme contempt on such foolery. They knew nothing about it, and assured me that there was nothing the least worth going to see. Nevertheless, I at last obtained a reference to a tailor, who, though he lived in the town, worked for the peasants, and was in fact a country tailor.

This, it must be understood, is totally a different profession from that of a town-tailor. The dress of the towns is for the men, and for the women, with the exception of the coiffure, as like that of their superiors as they can make it; and the artist, whose highest ambition would be to imitate at an humble distance the "mode de Paris," would be utterly ignorant of the mysteries, still more abstruse than his own, of cutting, lining, trimming, and embroidering a peasant's garments, and, worse still, of discriminating the various differences of form and colour appropriate to his customers in different communes. Yet these are not all, and hardly the most important duties and accomplishments of the "tailleur pour les campagnes;" nor those, perhaps, in which his rival of the town would be most utterly unable to compete with him.

The genuine Bas-Breton tailor is the chronicler and poet of the village. Very often he is an improvisatore of no mean pretensions,

and is ever a welcome guest at the cottages and farm-houses of the district. His work is for the most part done in the houses of his employers, where his board is the most important portion of his remuneration. He is generally hunchbacked or crippled in some way, a misfortune which, unfitting him for any more athletic employment, was the cause of his adopting a profession somewhat scorned by the peasants, though his usefulness and amusing talents make him a general favourite among the women. Very often, in the more remote districts, the village tailor has no dwelling at all of his own, but lives entirely among the different farm-houses, going from one to another as his services are required. Altogether, the tailor is an important and far from uninfluential member of Bas-Breton society; and, as such, and as being moreover a somewhat remarkable personage in himself, he ought perhaps to have been more formally presented to the reader's notice than in a digression.

It was to an eminent member of this profession that I was directed, as the person who was most likely to be able to give me all information about the tragedy. We had some little difficulty in finding him, but, when found, it was evident that he was the right

man to apply to, for he let us see in a minute that he was perfectly au fait of the whole affair. The tragedy of the life and death of St. Helen was to be presented at Lancerre the next day, to begin at two o'clock precisely. It was to be commenced rather, for these tragedies are extremely long; and our informant explained to us that the "Life and Death of St. Helen" would occupy six days in the representation; that the performers and audience would adjourn as soon as it grew dark, and begin again where they left off, at the same hour on the day but one after. Our friend knew the performers well, and could undertake to assure us that we should be gratified by the display of histrionic talent of a higher order, than we had probably ever before witnessed.

This was all extremely satisfactory; and, highly delighted with our good luck, we determined by no means to fail in presenting ourselves at the spot indicated to us punctually at two o'clock on the following day.

A little after twelve, therefore, on the morrow, we left Paimpol; and when we had walked some distance from the town, and had fairly got into the country among the villages, we overtook plenty of groups evidently bound on the same expedition as ourselves. These

increased in number as we advanced; and, when about twenty minutes before two we approached the scene of action, the hollow lane, in which we were walking, became literally filled with the moving crowd. We therefore advanced but slowly, and it wanted only five minutes of the appointed time when we emerged from the lane, on a small open common adjoining the churchyard of the village of Lancerre.

It was easy to see at once that this was to be the scene of the intended theatricals, and a spot better adapted to the purpose could not have been chosen. The ground, though all covered with turf, was considerably broken and uneven, so as to afford peculiar facilities to a large concourse of people, all anxious to have a perfect view of the same object. On the highest point of the ground, with its back against the gable-end of a house adjoining the common, was the stage. Nine large carts had been arranged in close order, in three rows of three each, and on these a rude scaffolding of planks was supported. At the back of this were hung, on a rope sustained by poles, on either side, several sheets, so as to partition off a portion at the back of the stage, to serve as a green-room for the performers to retire to. This white back

ground was ornamented with a few boughs of laurel, and bunches of wild flowers, and, somewhat less appropriately, perhaps, with two or three coloured prints, from the cottages of the neighbours of Bonaparte, and the Virgin.

Of the performers — though it was now past two o'clock, despite the promised punctuality of our friend, the tailor— there was yet no appearance. The crowd, however, seemed to be waiting with great patience, and every body appeared to be in high good humour. All were busily engaged in securing the most advantageous places. One long row, chiefly composed of women, occupied the top of the churchyard wall — a most desirable position, inasmuch as though seated at their ease, they were sufficiently raised to see over the heads of those who stood at the bottom of the wall. Some preferred seats on a bank which commanded a perfect view of the stage, but which must have been rather too far to hear well, to a nearer place, where it would have been necessary to stand. The greater part of the men stood in the immediate front of the scaffolding, gazing on the unoccupied stage, and waiting with imperturbable patience the appearance of the performers.

At length, the shrill tones of the national

instrument — the bagpipe — were heard approaching from a lane, which opened upon the common, and all eyes were immediately turned in that direction. We were, probably, the only persons on the ground, who were not aware that this betokened the arrival of the players. But we were not long left in our ignorance. For presently the bagpiper himself, followed by men bearing the banners belonging to the church, made their appearance upon the common. Behind these, in grave and solemn procession, and full theatrical costume, came the tragedians. The crowd immediately formed a lane for them to pass, and thus, with great dignity and decorum, they reached the scaffolding, and one after another mounted by a ladder to the stage. When they were all up, they marched thrice round the boards in the same order as before, with the bagpipe still playing at their head; then gravely bowed to the audience, who lifted their hats in return, and retired behind the sheets, to their green-room.

The appearance of the corps dramatique was more preposterously absurd and strange than can well be conceived by those who have not seen them with the accompanying circumstances of air, manner, and expression, and all



Drawn and Etched ... Meason

the surrounding objects, which gave such novelty and striking character to the scene.

There was the pope with his triple crown, very ingeniously constructed of coloured paper, a black petticoat for a cassock, a shirt for a surplice, and a splendid cope, made of paper-hangings, and with the twofold cross in his hand. There were two kings with paper crowns, adorned with little waxen figures of saints, and arrayed in printed cotton robes, carrying in one hand a sword, and in the other a cross. Three or four wore the uniform of the national guard, and the remainder made any additions they could to their usual costume, which they thought would most contribute to the general effect. The female characters were all sustained by men, dressed as much like the usual costume of ladies as their knowledge and resources would permit. A very fine young man, six feet high by two and a half at least broad, was selected to personate St. Helen, who was dressed entirely in white, with a large tablecloth for a veil.

There was one exception only to the general air of deep gravity and perfect seriousness which prevailed throughout. This was a buffoon, who was dressed in shreds, with a cap and bells, and a long pigtail, with a huge

horn in his hand, which he blew from time to time. His part was to fill up the time between the acts with buffoonery and jests. He was regarded by the crowd as he walked in the procession, making faces and affecting to ridicule the tragedians with a passing smile; but, for the most part, they were as grave as the performers.

The performance commenced by a single actor coming from behind the curtain of sheets, and making a very long speech. It was in rhyme, and was delivered in a very distinct manner, with much but very unvaried action, and an extremely loud voice, that strongly marked the rhythm and cadences of the verse. He began at one corner of the front of the stage, and spoke a certain number of lines, then moved to the middle, and repeated a similar quantity, did the same at the other corner, and then returned to his original position, and so on. In this manner, he must have delivered, I should think, nearly two hundred verses.

He then retired, and out came the buffoon. His fun consisted, of course, chiefly in absurd attitudes, in blowing his horn, in ribaldry, and sundry standing jests, which succeeded in producing shouts of laughter. A man, who stood by us, and who spoke French, ex-

plained some of them to us. One old acquaintance, as ancient as Hierocles, the Grecian Joe Millar, I was surprised to find in such company. The fool told us that he had got a very fine house, which he wished to sell, and produced a brick as a specimen of it. But the most successful joke of all, which was repeated every time he came upon the stage, consisted in his assuming an air of the greatest terror, and effecting his escape in the most precipitate manner, when the graver actors returned upon the scene.

The same remarks will apply to the delivery of all the other actors as to that of the first. They generally continued walking up and down the stage while speaking, and marched round it in procession at the conclusion of every scene. We saw St. Helen kneeling to the king of England, and the pope mediating; a sorceress preparing poison; a wife killing her husband; a marriage, a dance, and a feast.

On one occasion, a group of four or five, constituting a sort of chorus, ranged themselves in a row at the back of the scene, and assented to every sentiment of the speaker by an action of the hand, and stamp of the foot, resembling the lunge of a fencer, which they made at the end of every verse. Once in the

course of a speech, the name of Jesus occurred, at which every hat in the crowd was lifted.

Thus it went on till dark, when the actors left the place as they had come, notice having been given that the play would be continued the next day but one.

During all these hours, the crowd had been deeply attentive. No emotion, however, was observable, nor were there any manifestations of approbation or the contrary. But one man observed to me that there were few countries in which such acting as that could be seen. None of the actors seemed once out in their immensely long parts, or even hesitated for an instant.

These tragedies, the genuine successors of the "mysteries," so much in vogue during the early part of the middle ages, exist for the most part in MS. only. They are extremely long, and occupy generally a large folio volume of close writing. One or two only have been printed. "The tragedy of St. William" is one of these. Of this I bought a copy, and procured the whole of it, to be translated word for word into French; and extremely curious it is in many parts. It is of the author of this drama that M. Souvestre writes ". . . . Il inventera tout, même l'histoire,

même la géographie. Il placera le Poitou entre la Turquie, la Persee, et l'Hybernie, pas trop loin de la Flandre. Au Sultan et au Schah de Perse, il fera invoquer indifféremment Luther, Apollon, ou Mahomet. Milan deviendra une ville de Poitou ; et Saint Guillaume ira, entre ses deux repas, jusqu' à Rome, demander au Pape raison d'une excommunication."

But by far the greater number of these productions, which there is reason to believe belong for the most part to a very remote period, are handed down in MS. from father to son with the most jealous care. They are most of them extremely rare, and M. Freminville mentions an instance in which the possessor of a copy of the tragedy of the life of Antichrist refused to lend it to the inhabitants of another parish, who wished to perform it, unless two hundred and fifty francs were deposited in pledge for its safe return.

The subjects of these extremely curious works are taken from various sources. Many — the greater part probably — are from the sacred history, or the lives of the saints. The romances of the round table, and those of the court of Charlemagne, have furnished the groundwork of several. But, perhaps, the most interesting of all are those whose

fable is taken from the local history of the country.

We returned to Paimpol after this very extraordinary and interesting exhibition, feeling as if we had really been permitted to step back a few hundred years, and witness a scene from the life of the middle ages.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Beauport Abbey—Origin of the Convent—Its Progress—Detail of the Convent Revenues, and their Expenditure—Monastic Humility—Privileges—Remarkably Litigious Spirit of Monastic Communities—Anecdote—Project of the Abbé de la Menais—Architectural Particulars of Beauport—Secret Recesses in Monastic Buildings—Wrecked Vessel—"Frère Ignorantin"—Legend of St. Maudez.

The next day after our return from the tragedy at Lancerre, we made an excursion to Beauport, for the purpose of visiting the ruins of the large abbey, which had existed there for some six hundred years before the revolution. It is situated on the shore of the bay two or three miles to the east of Paimpol; but a long tongue of land runs far out into the sea between it and the town, so that it stands on the coast of a secluded little bay of its own.

As soon as we had crossed the root of this tongue of land, we saw the ruins of the superb building, majestic in their fallen state, on a knoll, rising a little above the level of the

beach. It seemed to me that their position was not so happily chosen as that of most of the monastic ruins I have seen. There is a wooded little valley opening on the coast close to the spot where they stand, which would have afforded within its shade a more sheltered and more desirable position. But the earliest settlers on this exposed spot had been accustomed to a residence that might well make this appear to them the perfection of security and comfort.

In the mouth of the bay of Paimpol, there is a small island, but little better than a bare rock, called the Isle of St. Riom. On this cheerless and inhospitable spot were congregated, towards the end of the twelfth century, a knot of men, whom either love of God, or dislike of his creation, had prompted to quit a world which, truly, mankind had at that time contrived to make no very desirable abiding place. But the recluse community soon found that their enthusiastic avoidance of their kind had driven them to a spot which, if secured from the temptations of the world and the injuries of men, was equally cut off from their charities and assistance. The rigours of their storm-swept rock, and the difficulty of obtaining from the main land the supplies necessary for the support of life,

made the solitaries desirous of establishing themselves, if not among, still within reach of men. And in the year 1198, Alain d'Avaugour, Count of Penthievre, of Goello, and of Treguier, realized their utmost wishes by giving them for the establishment of their monastery his house at Beauport.

Here they fixed themselves, and, by the accumulated benefactions of their patron and his powerful descendants, became ere long, instead of a knot of anchorites, with difficulty finding the means of supporting life, a wealthy, flourishing, and powerful community. Their first benefactor built them, in 1202, the noble church, whose walls are still standing. In 1269, the superb refectory, which may also still be seen, was erected. And, in short, their prosperity and possessions continued increasing, till they became one of the richest conventual establishments in Britanny.

In 1284, we find Abbot Peter assigning the tithes of the two parishes of Yvias and Plourivo, to supply the expense of allowing the monks an unlimited portion of wine on commemorations, solemnities, *and other days*;—of giving them the means of drinking "plenariè," as the document expresses it.

Notwithstanding this, however, and sundry other notices tending the same way, it does

not appear that the poor monks were indulging in any undue degree of luxury, at least during the later days of their establishment. The inhabitants of the abbey were latterly not more than fifteen or sixteen ; and its possessions amounted to forty-eight thousand francs. It may seem, therefore, at first sight, absurd to say that the inmates enjoyed no more than a bare subsistence. Yet such was the case; and as, doubtless, the circumstances of many other of the monasteries destroyed at the revolution, in which the monks were said to be living in great luxury, were similar to those of Beauport, it may be not uninteresting to go over in detail the expenditure of the forty-eight thousand francs.

First comes the "Abbé commendataire," having gained the appointment by some court intrigue, a stranger alike to the monastery, its concerns, and its inmates, who never comes near the place, or interests himself the least about its government or prosperity. The Abbé of Beauport frequently refused to contribute any thing out of his share of the revenues, even towards the necessary repairs of the fabric of the monastery. Of the forty-eight thousand francs, he received fourteen thousand, clear of all expenses. Thirty-four thousand, therefore, remain. Of these 14,423

francs were consumed in necessary expenses, consisting of the maintenance in good repair of their own buildings, and of fifteen parish-churches, and thirteen parsonages. The constant repair required by the sea-wall, which protected their garden against the tide, was also a heavy item of the account. One stormy night would often do damage to the amount of eight hundred francs; and the monastery has paid for this one thing six thousand francs in a year. There remain 19,577 francs. Out of this were to be maintained twenty poor families of the parishes of Kerity and Plouezec, according to the immemorial practice of the abbey. Allowing for this purpose so small a sum as £20 to each family, this expense would amount to ten thousand francs. Of the forty-eight thousand francs, then, there are but 9,577 left to meet all the interior expenses of the convent, including the daily alms distributed at the gate. The annual cost of the food, clothing, "and medicine," of each monk was estimated at seven hundred francs only. And this by itself for fifteen of them—the usual number of the establishment—wouldamount to 10,500, very nearly a thousand francs more than all they had to meet the whole of the expenses of the house. So that the monks of the wealthy abbey of Beau-

port were by no means in very easy circumstances, or very luxuriously provided for.

But, if the monks were, in their manner of living, really as poor as their rule enjoined them to be, it does not follow that they were equally eminent for the other great monastic virtue, humility. It is curious to observe how constantly monachism had the effect, not of conquering human passions, but of changing their object. The poor monk, who possessed nothing, and had relinquished all notion of property in his own person, could yet be avaricious for his convent; and the man in whose breast every feeling of individual pride had been quenched by the most self-abasing humility, could still be proud of his order, and still more exclusively of his own community.

Thus we find the monks of Beauport termed, in a variety of acts during the fifteenth century, "honnêtes religieux," or "humbles religieux." In the seventeenth century, the style had changed, and we find them assuming the title of "venerables" in more than one document of that period. But, in the year 1752, they had become "nobles et discrets." The same feeling is shewn in a variety of existing documents relating to sundry privileges which the popes and dukes

of Britanny had, at various periods, conferred upon them, and of which it seems they were extremely jealous.

Among very many others, of a less remarkable description, we find one characteristic of the period at which it was granted, and which must have been in those days a very important one, and have been valued in proportion. Innocent III., by a special bull, permits them, whenever the rest of the country should be under an interdict, to celebrate the divine office in their church, provided it be done with closed doors, in the absence of all excommunicated persons, without any ringing of bells, and in a low voice. "Cum autem generale interdictum terræ fuerit, liceat vobis in ecclesiâ vestrâ, clausis januis, exclusis excommunicatis et interdictis, non pulsatis campanis, suppressâ voce, divina officia celebrare."

In 1266 the duke John had conferred on the monastery "jurisdiction haute, basse, et moyenne, sur tous les hommes et sujets dependant de l'abbaye;" and in 1650 we find the parliament reversing a judgment of the monks, who had condemned to death three men for having stolen some corn by night out of the abbey mill. The parliament acquit two, and condemn the other to be scourged.

As a specimen of the sort of spirit with which conventual privileges, sometimes of a far more unimportant description, were maintained, the following anecdote may be cited.

The little island of Belle-isle-en-mer was abundantly stocked with rabbits; and it unfortunately happened that two small convents claimed the exclusive right of hunting them. For this right the serfs of these two abbeys fought for a space of a hundred and forty years with the most virulent animosity; and the abbot of one of them chose to brave the fulminations of bishops and councils, and to live deprived of the use of the sacraments, rather than submit to the decisions given against him on the subject. That the same spirit existed with unimpaired vigour in later days, though it shewed itself in a manner more consistent with the spirit of the times, may be gathered from the curious fact that, when the revolution broke out, there was not a single monastery that had not several causes pending in the courts.

In the case of Beauport, the litigious spirit of its former inhabitants seems to have descended with the walls to its present possessors. For I was told that it was some dispute among the proprietors of the ruins, which caused the well-known Abbé de La-

menais to give up a scheme he had conceived, of purchasing the buildings which remain, and establishing there an extensive printing-office, the management of which was to be confided to literary men, and so converting Beauport into a new Port-Royal. I should have thought that other and more insurmountable objections and obstacles to such a scheme might have been discovered.

The principal remains at Beauport consist of the church, the refectory, and kitchen, with the vast range of cellars beneath them. The refectory is a noble room, of exceedingly elegant proportions. It is ninety feet long, by twenty-one wide; and has eight large, circular-headed windows, looking out upon the bay. The whole length, as at present seen, is a hundred and eighteen feet; but a portion of this was divided from the refectory, and formed a buttery-hatch and kitchen. The enormous chimney of the latter, as usual, remains. The wrought stone capitals of the pillars, from which, in the refectory, the groining of the roof sprung, are still specimens of some of the most delicate carving I ever saw. Altogether this dining-hall must have been a most magnificent one, and must have appeared strangely incongruous with the meagre cheer of the fifteen poor monks, who,

out of all the riches of their splendidly endowed abbey, possessed but a bare and scanty subsistence.

Between this fine hall and the church, the cloisters were situated, the other two sides of their quadrangle having been formed by the dwellings of the monks and the various offices of the abbey, which have for the most part perished. In the cloisters, also, scarcely anything remains, except one or two capitals of broken pillars and fragments of arches, which suffice to shew that here, as in the refectory, the most elegant and correct architectural taste guided the expenditure of the vast wealth which must have been poured out to rear these walls.

When we attempted to enter the church, we found the doors, which yet remained, shut and locked; and were told that the captain of a vessel, which had been wrecked about a week ago at a little distance in the bay, had stowed there all the cargo that had been saved, and had the keys in his possession. We were told, however, that we should find him at the wreck, which lay on the other side of a little headland, that concealed it from our view. We, therefore, set off in search of him, and began by mounting the hill which intervened between us and the wreck, thinking it shorter

to cross the neck of the promontory than to walk round it along the beach. We had thus also the advantage of catching several good views of the abbey from different points of the hill-side. We could not, however, in any direction obtain such a view of the ruins as would make a good sketch.

As soon as we had reached the ridge of the promontory, we saw the wrecked vessel on the beach below us, and a crowd of workmen around her, engaged in repairing the damage done. We found the captain in the midst of them, overlooking, ordering, exhorting, and every now and then lending a hand, now here, now there, himself. It was evidently quite out of the question to expect him to leave his ship, and walk with us to the ruins; and it was equally clear that he did not at all like to trust us with the keys. He tried hard to persuade us that there was nothing at all to be seen in the old church. The altar had been destroyed and the pictures all taken away long ago, he said, and therefore there could be nothing to see. We should do much better to stay and watch the repairs of his ship, which really was interesting — besides he was not sure where he had put the keys.

But, when he found that we stuck to our point, and would not be put off, he lugged the

huge key out of his pocket and delivered it to us, with many charges not to forget to lock the door, and bring back the key to him there; which we faithfully promised to do. When, however, we had succeeded, after all this trouble, in reaching the interior of the church, we found that we should have saved ourselves a needless walk, if we had followed the captain's advice. The whole body of the church was occupied with a confused mass of barrels, boxes, spars, and cordage. Of the ornamental parts of the architecture very little remained, but quite enough of the forms and general style of the building were visible, to mark strikingly the great progress which architecture had made between the period at which the church was built (1202) and that at which the refectory followed (1269). In the former may be observed, mingled with the pointed architecture, which we term Gothic, the lingering forms of the circular arch. I believe that no building could be found in any other province of France of the thirteenth century, in which the circular arch had not been abandoned; a proof that, in architecture as well as in all other respects, and six hundred years ago as well as at the present day, this province was always behind the rest of France, and slower than any other

part of the country to change its habits and customs.

The tomb of Abbot Hervé, who built the refectory, is the only one which escaped the destruction of the revolution; and his effigy in full canonicals is yet to be seen under the wall in the south aisle.

The whole of the choir was, before the destruction of the monastery, lined with carved oak, behind which some workmen found, a little before the revolution, a secret sliding panel, which, on being pushed back, discovered a small hiding-place. In this nook was found an enamelled cup, of very antique form and workmanship, which in all probability must have been hidden there at a very remote period, on some occasion when the monks had reason to fear a descent of the Norman pirates, who so often ravaged these coasts. It appears strange that it should have so long remained undiscovered; but it seems that the existence and locality of such hiding-places were often a secret entrusted but to one or two of the brethren. And in that case it is easy to conceive that the sole depositaries of the secret might have perished in the attack, which caused the treasures of the society to be so secured; and that the hiding-place may have thus remained undis-

closed. That secret places, of a nature far more difficult to conceal, sometimes existed in the old monasteries, was proved by a circumstance connected with this abbey. A certain Father Le Sage, the last survivor of the monks of Beauport, who had been turned out at the Revolution, returned after the Restoration of the Bourbons, and, in wandering about his old home, discovered a secret stair, of whose existence he had never before been aware, although he had been an inmate of the house for several years. The strangeness of the place itself, and the mystery with which it had been concealed, even from the monks of the house, sets the imagination at work to fancy for what purpose of imposture or fraud it could have been contrived; or whether possibly it may have been destined to some of those purposes of yet darker hue, which, it is well known, monasteries were frequently not without the means of executing.

When we had remained long enough in the church to satisfy our curiosity respecting its present and our fancy as to its former appearance, we faithfully locked the door upon the shipwrecked goods, and returned with the key to the captain, whom we found still bustling about his vessel. The tide was rapidly coming in; and she was so situated,

that the repairs, on which the workmen were engaged, could only be proceeded with at low water. All hands, therefore, were making the most of the half-hour which remained to them. We continued watching the work as long as it could be carried on. One man, w[illegible]s caulking the part of the keel which [illegible] farthest down the beach, did not leave it [illegible]er was up to his middle.

[illegible] was on the strand one of those poor, meek, humble-looking creatures, called "Frères ignorantins," looking on also at the workmen. These poor brothers are not priests, though they wear bands, and a long black cloth dress, fitting close to the person, from the neck to the heel. The duty to which they devote themselves, is the instruction of the children of the lower classes, in the elements of reading, and the catechism. They are numerous [illegible] Britanny.

When we turned to leave the beach, the poor "frère ignorantin" turned too, and seemed inclined to enter into conversation with us. We walked together back to Beauport, and then it appeared that, like ourselves, our companion was bound for Paimpol, upon which he proposed to walk thither with us "si toujours vous ne le trouvez pas desagreable, Messieurs, de causer avec un pauvre



frère ignorantin." We willingly accepted his company, with the assurance that his conversation would beguile pleasantly our walk to Paimpol. Upon this he brightened up, and, pulling a very greasy and very old number of the " Siècle" from the bosom of his frock, he began to descant upon the May riots in Paris, which he said were a "facheux consequence du manque d' instruction chrétien parmi ces pauvres Parisiens." No statesman could have traced the evil to its root more accurately than the poor frère ignorantin; but nevertheless, as Parisian politics was not the subject on which I thought our friend most likely to be amusing, I turned the conversation to the ruins we had just passed. There, indeed, he was at home. He recounted to us the whole history of St. Riom and his establishment upon the rock, which has ever since borne his name, and the migration of his monks to Beauport. He then went on to relate the wonderful history of St. Maudez, another saint in particular esteem at Beauport, where he had a chapel all to himself in the Abbey. He told us, with a robust and unflinching faith which made him the best "conteur" conceivable, how he had cleared a desert isle of serpents merely by his presence; how, when he was building his monastery,

the devil — at his old tricks again — pulled down in the night all that he built in the day, till, one night, St. Maudez hid himself close to the spot where he had been at work during the day, and where, therefore, he felt sure the devil would come to play his tricks that night. He had not stayed long before the devil came, and began pulling the stones from the new walling, and pitching them about in all directions, and laughing like the very devil. This was more than the saint could stand; so he rushed out at him with such a torrent of latin, that the devil, being taken by surprise, and having, moreover, the disadvantage of a bad conscience, turned tail at once, and ran for his life. St. Maudez followed, and was just in time to give him a most tremendous kick behind, as he was in the act of flying off the top of the cliff which bounded the island. It is hardly necessary to add, that the devil never shewed his face there any more.

Had our walk home to Paimpol been ten times as long, I do not think that the frère ignorantin's stock of legends would have been exhausted. His characteristic little anecdotes of the devil were perfectly endless; and, by his account, miracles must have been as common as blackberries in this country

only a few years ago. I was exceedingly amused by the air with which he would add, after relating some most miraculous cure, "mais c'est bien commun ça," as much as to say, *we* don't consider that any thing;" we can do more than that any day of the week! And when, on arriving at Paimpol, we expressed to him at parting our thanks for the instruction he had communicated, he left us with—"mais il y a beaucoup d' autres choses, messieurs, plus extraordinaires encore que tout ce que j' ai dit, et aussi vraies je vous assure."

CHAPTER XXVII.

Lezardrieux — Chateau of La Roche Jagu — Architectural peculiarity — View from the top of the Chateau — Subterranean Constructions — Legend — Remarkable circumstance connected with the Vaults of La Roche Jagu — Treguier — The Tour d' Hasting — Cloisters of the Cathedral — Lady's Chapel — Discovery of the ancient mode of Painting on Glass — St. Yves' Bed — Legend of St. Yves — Beggars — Road-side Crosses.

The next morning we left Paimpol, and walked a short distance to our breakfast at Lezardrieux. This little village, whose name ought rather to be written Lezartrieux, since its Celtic derivation signifies the court upon the Trieux, contains nothing remarkable at the present day. But it will shortly possess one of the finest suspension bridges yet built. The river, which we had admired above Guimgamp, as a little rippling trout stream, which a moderate spring would carry one across, is here a wide estuary, hithertopassable only by a ferry. The piers of the new bridge are almost completed, and are of a height

which will permit vessels of considerable tonnage to pass beneath it.

From Lezardrieux we had an extremely pretty walk along the banks of the Trieux to the chateau de La Roche Jagu, one of the most interesting remains of the domestic architecture of the middle ages I ever saw. The position of it must have been advantageous in a military point of view, and is now extremely picturesque. At a spot where the river makes a graceful bend, the hill, following the curve of the stream, rises to a considerable height, in a very steep, hollow amphitheatre, covered with pines, mingled with masses of grey rock. One of the extreme points of this amphitheatre is crowned with a mass of rocks, piled one above the other, in every conceivable irregularity of form. A profusion of various wild flowers, chiefly broom and heather, grow about these, and with the harmonising grey tints of the stones, produce a richness of colouring which shews to great advantage, set, as it were, in its frame of sombre pines. On the opposite point of the semicircular hill stands, amid surrounding masses of dark and heavy foliage, the mansion of La Roche Jagu.

The building, which remains entire, is a specimen of a style of dwelling which was ex-

tremely common in the latter centuries of the middle ages, but of which few now remain. Not aspiring to the appearance or appellation of a fortress or castle, it was yet adapted—and that in no trifling degree—for defence. Such buildings held, in fact, a middle rank between the castellated strongholds of the higher nobility and those "manoirs" of which I have spoken before, whose principal means of defence consisted in a good stone wall around the house, and whose utmost intention and hope was to withstand the sudden attack of brigands or pirates.

La Roche Jagu, on the contrary, would have made no contemptible resistance to a regular siege, though consisting of one single body of building, and unprovided with any exterior defences. But every thing there bespeaks the attention paid at its construction to strength and solidity. And, as the building remains precisely in its ancient state, the examination of it is extremely interesting.

The front, which looks towards the river, has no entrance in it, and very few windows; and it is remarkable for a peculiarity which I do not remember to have observed elsewhere. Instead of being in a right line, the façade forms an obtuse angle. The walls on this side are between thirteen and fourteen

feet thick. On the other front of the building there is a large court, surrounded by a high wall. The front, which looks upon this, has one small, low, arched doorway, protected first by its massive door of very thick oak, and then, within that, by an immensely heavy grating of iron bars. It is composed of eleven upright bars, crossed by fourteen horizontal ones, each as thick as a man's wrist. This invincible gate swings on four proportionable hinges, and is fastened by four huge locks.

Through this we passed to the interior of the house, now occupied by a peasant's family. Most of the immense rooms are now used only as granaries; but in two or three we saw several articles of furniture, which must have belonged to the sixteenth century at the latest. One or two chairs, an old bedstead, some faded tapestry, and several very quaint and highly-ornamented dogs for the hearth, chiefly attracted our attention. The chapel is a small but elegantly formed chamber, hollowed out of the immense mass of masonry of the outward wall.

At the top of the building, along the whole of the front, which looks towards the river, there is a gallery immediately under the roof, for the sentinels to walk in on their watch, and for the discharge of missiles on any who

might approach Roche Jagu with hostile intentions. The view from this gallery is charming. Though far from being extensive, the little home landscape upon which the eye looks down is rich in its fortunate combination of beautiful objects. The fine curve of the hill-side, with its covering of pine forest, broken here and there by grey rocks, sprinkled with the gay hues of wild flowers, and the graceful sweep of the river at its base, hiding itself from the eye at its next turn between the wooded banks, and enticing the fancy to busy itself with the hidden beauties of its farther course, form a little picture, which, when enlivened, as we saw it, by the presence of a Norwegian brig, making its slow and stately way up the river to Pontrieux, and the more rapid and lighter movements of two or three little fishing-boats, is quite sufficient to detain the gaze, and prevent any wish for a more extended horizon.

The builders of the middle ages rarely omitted, in planning a dwelling intended to protect its inmates from the manifold perils of force and fraud so rife in those days, to provide the means of escape from, as well as of resistance to, danger. We seldom, therefore, fail to find among the ruins of a feudal stronghold the openings of subterraneous

passages or secret vaults. And the unexplored mysteries of such long abandoned and frequently blocked up passages are apt to affect strongly the imagination of the peasants, always greedy of the marvellous, and give rise to a multitude of strange tales and traditionary wonders respecting them.

The subterraneous passages existing at Roche Jagu are believed to be unusually extensive. They are said to pass under the river which flows at least a hundred feet below the foundations of the building, and to communicate with another fortress more than a league distant. But all the entrances to them, of which there were several, have been carefully walled up. The mysterious stories, therefore, current respecting the unexplored secrets of the vaults of Roche Jagu, are especially numerous. Some think that treasure to an immense amount is hidden there. Others declare that the guilty souls of a whole crew of Norman pirates haunt these vaults. It is said that, having murdered there a priest, who happened to be lodging at Roche Jagu for the night, and who, when the house was attacked, had fled thither for safety, they were condemned perpetually to wander in the dreary scene of their crime. The good Bretons do not seem to think much of their

having murdered all the rest of the inmates as well.

But there is a circumstance attached to the history of the subterranean constructions at Roche Jagu, which is, in reality, very strange, and which has, no doubt, contributed to give rise to the mass of stories current about them. All the entrances to these vaults have been carefully walled up, as I said before; and, when, in the year 1773, the Duc de Richelieu, to whom the chateau then belonged, sold it to a M. Le Gonideç de Tressan, it was expressly stipulated, and inserted as a condition in the deed of sale, that the mouths of them should never be opened, nor any attempt be made to penetrate to them in any way, or dissipate the mystery that hangs over them.

Thus much is no vague rumour, but an indisputable fact; and it must be confessed that a less mysterious circumstance might suffice to sharpen one's curiosity as to the cause of so very extraordinary a precaution.

Bidding adieu to Roche Jagu and its mysteries, we walked to Treguier, through a country which has the reputation of being the most fertile of the department. We entered Treguier by a suspension bridge, recently erected, over the river Jaudy, which, immediately below the town, becomes a wide es-

tuary. But, above the town, where the road crosses it, it is of no great width, and the bridge is in no wise comparable to that which will soon span the Trieux at Lezardrieux.

Treguier was one of the five bishoprics into which the northern coast of Britanny was divided before the revolution; and the origin of the town was similar to that of St. Brieuc. St. Tugdual built on this spot a monastery in the sixth century, around which gradually was formed the town. The cathedral is small, and has nothing remarkable about it, with the exception of one tower at the extremity of the south transept, called the "Tour d'Hasting."

This tower is probably one of the most ancient edifices at present existing in France. The history of it seems to be clear and unquestioned. In the year 836 the Danes, under the conduct of their chief, Hasting, made a descent upon this coast, utterly destroyed St. Tugdual's monastery, murthered the inhabitants, and, liking the place, settled themselves permanently there; and, in the year 838, or thereabouts, erected the tower which we now see built into the body of the cathedral. Nothing can be more evident than that it belongs to a much more remote period than any other part of the building; and there is no

reason to doubt the constant testimony of the old chronicles that it was built by the Danes at the above date. But, in spite of its name, in the teeth of invariable tradition, and, above all, in direct contradiction to the certain evidence of the building itself, some of the local antiquaries have insisted upon assigning to it a Roman origin. No one, however, who has observed with any attention the invariable characteristics of Roman architecture, could fall into such a mistake.

It is a plain square tower, tapering, I think, a little towards the top, with a small, round turret running up one of its angles, and containing a stair. It has been divided into four floors, but the flooring has entirely perished. The only place from which this curious tower can be seen to any advantage, is the cloisters, from one corner of which it rises. The cloisters themselves remain in a very tolerable state of preservation, and have been built with an elegance of design and delicacy of execution which could hardly have been expected from a Breton artist of the fifteenth century.

While my companion sat down to make a sketch of the cloisters and Hasting's tower, I went into the church, and, strolling round behind the choir, was amused by the appear-

ance of the Virgin's chapel. It was fitted up like a little boudoir, with a profusion of white and blue drapery, and nosegays, &c. Fancifully arranged, in gold letters upon a white muslin ground, were the words "Amour à Marie," on one side, and, opposite to it, "Gloire à Marie."

As I was quitting the cathedral I met a jolly-looking fellow, who, seeing I was a stranger, seemed inclined to enter into conversation with me. He told me that he was one of the chanters of the church, and kept a bookbinder's shop in the town. He seemed to be an intelligent sort of fellow, and professed himself a dabbler in antiquarianism. After we had talked awhile about various parts of the church, he told me, with an air of no small mystery, that he had discovered an important secret, which had hitherto been deemed lost for ever. This turned out to be nothing less than the ancient manner of colouring glass. He had found, he said, a few years ago, in an old house in Treguier, a MS. in Gothic character, professing to be written by a certain Jesuit, which he had read after much difficulty, and found to be a treatise perfectly explanatory of the whole art of painting on glass. He had made, he said, many experiments, the result of which

had in every case proved the correctness of the directions given by the MS. He intended, after making some more experiments on a somewhat larger scale, to take out a patent, and hoped to turn his discovery to profit. He said that he had been offered large sums for the MS., but would not part with it.

The country around Treguier is not pretty, and our walks in the neighbourhood were consequently few. But we could not neglect to visit a relic so remarkable and so holy as the bed of St. Yves, which is preserved in a farm-house near the town. The second evening, therefore, of our stay at Treguier, was devoted to a walk to the "Manoir de Kermartin," the house where St. Yves was born, and died in the bed, which is still preserved there.

St. Yves is one of the most popular saints of Britanny, and the especial patron of lawyers. He was himself the official of the diocese of Treguier, so that it was the more extraordinary that he should have lived honest, and died a saint; which a very ancient canticle made in his honour thus expresses:—

"Sanctus Yvo erat Brito,
Advocatus, et non latro!
Res miranda populo!" (bis)

Many legends are extant respecting St. Yves' legal sayings and doings, some of them sufficient testimonies of his acuteness and ingenuity, if not of his sanctity. Upon one occasion, for example, he went to lodge with a poor woman at Tours, whom he found in great distress, about a cause which was going to be given against her the next day, to her utter ruin. The case was this: Two travellers had come to her house, and on going away had given into her care a casket, which they requested her to keep, and not to deliver it up, except to both of them together. This the good woman undertook to do. Some time after, one of the travellers came with some other men dressed like merchants, and said that they had just been purchasing goods, and begged the hostess to let him take some money out of the casket to pay for them. She unsuspiciously handed him the case, which he made off with, and had never been seen since. The other traveller had returned subsequently, and when he heard what had happened, had declared himself a ruined man, saying, that there were in the casket twelve hundred golden crowns, which was all he possessed in the world. In vain the poor woman declared her innocence of any fraud, and her inability to pay such a sum. The ruined

merchant insisted upon taking all she had, and had sued her for the amount, on the ground of her having violated the conditions of the trust. And judgment was about to be given against her to-morrow.

St Yves, however, bid her cheer up, and put her trust in God, and said that he would undertake her cause. The next day, in court, when the judge was about to give sentence, St. Yves stepped forward, and said a circumstance had happened which changed the face of the whole affair. The fact was that, after diligent search, the hostess had recovered possession of the casket. The other party declared that was all they wished, and demanded that it should be instantly produced. St. Yves observed that by doing so, his client would be committing exactly that breach of trust which was now urged against her. She was bound not to produce the casket, except to both its owners together; and that she was quite ready to do when they both applied for it.

The house in which this "second Daniel" was born and died, has been very lately pulled down, and a modern one erected on the property. The manor of Kermartin is the property of M. Quelen, Archbishop of Paris; and when the new house was built he took

care to have St. Yves' bed removed thither, and has placed an inscription over the door, stating that the house in which the saint had lived and died had been unavoidably pulled down, but that the bed now seen within was the same which had stood in the old house since the saint's death. The bed in question is a "lit clos," in all respects exactly like those of the farmers of the present day.

It is admitted that the front only, which is handsomely carved, and as black as jet, is part of the old bed, as the immense quantity of morsels of the wood, which had been carried off by the pious as relics, had gradually caused all the rest of it to disappear, and be replaced from time to time by unsanctified timber. St. Yves died in the year 1303; and the existence of this bedstead proves, therefore, the very high antiquity of the box bedsteads, still used exclusively by the Breton peasants. For even if we were to suppose that in all probability the identical bed of St. Yves has, in every part of it, long since perished, yet it cannot be doubted that the successive reparations have always preserved its original form, and, as nearly as possible, its appearance.

As we walked back to Treguier, we heard several peasants in the fields, or returning

from their work, singing their vespers. One woman was carrying a large sack of wool on her head, while her hands were busily employed in knitting, and her voice in beguiling the way by singing the evening psalms in a sort of low, monotonous chant.

Just before entering the town, we overtook a very old woman, who begged of us. We gave her a sous, upon which she kissed her hand, and then, dropping down on her knees in the midst of the road, began bawling a "pater noster," with the very utmost strength of her lungs, which she continued till we were out of hearing. No beggar in Britanny plies his trade without being in possession of a scrap or two of ecclesiastical latin, which he recites as a prayer for those who give him any thing. I have not the least doubt that this procures them many a sous from the peasants, who, many of them, attach a sort of talismanic virtue to a few words of latin. Have they not, indeed, been taught to do so?

The number of crucifixes erected by the road-side, and in every possible situation, where they might be supposed to attract notice, is in this part of the country, and, indeed throughout Lower Britanny, perfectly astonishing. They are very many of them modern, for the quantity destroyed in Brit-

anny during the revolution is quite incredible. "On pourrait dire," says M. Souvestre, "sans exaggération, que dans certains endroits, nos routes de traverse sont impierrées avec des saints: c'est un *inacadamisage* complet de têtes, de corps, et de membres de statues chrétiennes."

The extraordinary number of road-side crosses may be conceived from a fact recorded by the same author. During the Restoration, there was an idea of replacing all, which had been destroyed in that terrible year, 1793. But the notion was abandoned, when it was found, from accurate returns, that it would cost 1,500,000 francs to accomplish this in the single department of Finistere alone. They are rapidly being replaced, however, by the crucifixes and virgins, raised daily almost by the devotion of the richer peasants. A Bas-Breton farmer's highest ambition is to place an enormous granite crucifix by the road-side, with his name, and that of his wife, cut on the pedestal, together with a request to the passengers to pray for the repose of their souls. Frequently, the hard and careful savings of many parsimonious years are devoted to this purpose by men, who literally have barely food to eat.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Grand Mass at a School — State of Religion—Anecdote—Remnants of Paganism — " Notre Dame de la Haine " — Character of the Population in the District of Treguier — Critical Moment in the National Existence—A " Bretonne " on her Return from Paris—Veteran of the " Grande Armée—Specimen of the Popular Tales of this part of the Country — The Adventures of Troadec on this side of the Grave, and the other.

The next day was Sunday, and we went to the morning service at the " college," where we were told that there would be a " grande messe à la musique." We found the music, which was played by some of the pupils, and consisted principally of a quick march, performed during one part of the service, not worth much; but the evident devotion with which the offices were joined in, by a congregation of two or three hundred young men, was extremely striking, and highly characteristic of the country we were in. Having said thus much of the congregation, it is hardly necessary to add that they were almost all the sons of peasants, or farmers, or

other classes of similar rank. For among these classes only, and the priests and women, is any sentiment of religion to be found.

In fact, the country is divided between the most violent bigotry and grossest superstition on the one hand, and utter atheism, or, at the best, deism on the other. I found frequent opportunities of ascertaining the sentiments of the men I met in the inns, and at the tables d'hôte, etc., on religious subjects; and I heard, almost universally, a belief in the Christian revelation treated with the same contemptuous smile, and an elevation of the eyebrows expressive of such surprise, as a profession of belief in Joanna Southcote might occasion in this country. In the town churches, where the names of those frequenting them may be read inscribed on the chairs they occupy, I never once saw, among all the "Madames" and "Mademoiselles," a single "Monsieur;" though I constantly looked over the names on the chairs to see if I could find one.

A merchant, evidently a man of considerable education, once confessed to me that, though of course he believed none of the nonsense the priests talked about God, and his son, and the saints, and their miracles, and all that, yet he liked sometimes, as a remini-

scence of his boyhood, to go to mass, *when he happened to be in a country village where he was not known.*

How awful is the amount of mischief, which the Roman Church has done, by putting on the same footing, and requiring the same assent to the sure truths, which form the basis of Christianity, and the mass of contradictory impossibilities, with which, for corrupt purposes, she has overlaid and disguised them! It is monstrous and incredible that the majority of the educated classes of a great nation should remain in a belief unnatural to man, and revolting alike to his instinct, and to the thousand evidences of his every-day life. But the men of France are driven, if not to the theoretical atheism of conviction, yet certainly to the practical consequences of that cheerless creed, by being required by the authorized teachers of Christianity to believe facts almost as absurd, and to receive doctrines very nearly as abhorrent to common sense as atheism itself.

It would be folly to expect, and hardly, perhaps, to be wished, that the educated classes should adopt the religious creed and practises, which the superstitious peasants around them mistake for Christianity. Nothing can be farther from its spirit than

many of their superstitions. Nor are all of these to be traced entirely to the corruptions of the Roman church. Christianity properly preached would doubtless have, ere this, eradicated them; but, in many instances, ideas, evidently derived from the theology of Paganism, still mix with and pollute the doctrines of revealed religion, in the tenacious minds of this strangely unchanging people.

Very near Treguier, on a spot appropriately selected for such a worship—the barren top of a bleak unsheltered eminence—stands the chapel of *Notre Dame de la Haine!* our lady of HATRED! The most fiendish of human passions is supposed to be under the patronage and protection of Christ's religion! What is this but a fragment of pure and unmixed Paganism, unchanged, except in the appellation of its idol, which has remained among these linial descendants of the Armorican Druids, for more than a thousand years after Christianity has become the professed religion of the country!

Every wild passion of the human heart, whose uncurbed impulse he felt to be resistless, and therefore deemed omnipotent, was raised by the Celt into a God, and worshipped upon altars erected in his honour. And when, unbaptized in heart and understanding, the

Pagan was persuaded to receive the sign of a new faith, and swell the number of some eager preacher's converts, little in his religious feelings and notions was changed, except the names of his divinities. The same passions still ruled his breast with undiminished violence, and directed his actions with undisputed sway; and were, therefore, still worshipped under the nomenclature of the new faith, whose ill-judging teachers suffered it to adapt itself but too easily to the habits and ideas of polytheism.

It was thus that altars, professedly Christian, were raised under the invocation of the Protean Virgin to the demon Hatred; and have continued to the present day to receive an unholy worship from blinded bigots, who hope to obtain Heaven's patronage and assistance for thoughts and wishes which they would be ashamed to breathe to man. Three "Aves," repeated with devotion at this odious and melancholy shrine, are firmly believed to have the power of causing, within the year, the certain death of the person against whom the assistance of "Our Lady of Hatred" is invoked. And it is said that even yet occasionally, in the silence and obscurity of evening, the figure of some assassin worshipper at this accursed shrine

may be seen to glide rapidly from the solitary spot, where he has spoken the unhallowed prayer, whose mystic might has doomed to death the enemy he "hates."

But although this and many other ancient superstitions still prevail in the "pays de Treguier," by which may be understood the western part of the Côtes du Nord—there is reason to think that in this district religion is gradually losing its hold upon the minds of the people. Unlike Finistere, the country here is in a state of transition; the Celtic character, language, and costume, are slowly submitting to the same process of change, which has at length rendered the upper province to so great a degree French; and another hundred years probably will suffice to make the Breton language extinct in the ancient diocese of Treguier.

It is an important and perilous epoch in the national life—this state of transition. The wakening of a people from the intellectual slumber of ages to that state of restless mental activity, aspiring thoughts, and ceaseless questioning, which the present age conceives to be the characteristics of its own highly wrought civilization, is a crisis, which however inevitable, when the time is come, nay, however desirable it may be, is, if pregnant

with hope, yet fraught with danger; and requires the highest wisdom and utmost care of those leading minds, whose mission it is, either in the senate or the closet, to shape the destiny of nations.

Exhausted by the wild excitement and high fever of those centuries of strong energies and violent impulses, which, however contrasted in many respects with the present age, had yet some striking characteristics in common with it, the patient sank into the deep lethargic sleep, from which he is now about to be roused. It would be alike improper and impracticable to prolong by opiates the slumber of disease; but will he wake to the rational enjoyment and beneficial use of a sound mind or to delirium?

It is a question interesting to lovers of their kind. Let us seek the probable answer in the observations of an author, who had great opportunities of becoming acquainted with the temper of the people under consideration.

" C'est une contrée," says M. Souvestre, " que l'épidémie de la civilization va prendre au premier jour; les symptômes s'en annoncent par avance. Sans que l'on puisse dire précisément que les croyances y sont ébranlées, quelques esprits s'y laissent déjà aller à une liberté de camaraderie envers les choses

saintes. Ils n'en sont point arrivées à l'examen ni à la raillerie; mais ils osent déjà faire les plaisans avec la religion. Le bon Dieu est bien toujours leur bon ami, mais ce n'est plus un seigneur redouté; ils prennent avec lui les familiarités, que se permettrait un vieux serviteur avec son maître. Je crois que beaucoup de ces tièdes Catholiques mangeraient le Vendredi une omelette au lard, sans avoir trop de peur d'être foudroyés. C'est surtout chez *les maîtres d'école*, les douaniers, et les gardes champêtres que se remarque cette légère tendance philosophique. Quoique bien peu de chose dans notre ordre constitutionnel, quoique bien profondément perdus dans les derniers tours de la bobine sociale, *la loi athée* a déteint sur ces fonctionnaires villageois à travers tous les rangs supérieurs."

The state schoolmasters of the national education, it will be useful to observe, are the first atheists.

The dangerous position of these poor peasants, and the fine field for philanthropic exertions on a large scale which the peculiar state of these people offers, will be perceived from the above curious passage. But it is to be hoped, rather than expected, that the labouring of it should fall into hands either able or willing to cultivate it to real ad-

vantage. The process which is taking place there may, however, at least be an interesting and useful object of observation to others.

This was to be our last evening at Treguier; and as the others had been spent in rambling about till bed-time, we determined to night, after our eight o'clock supper, to try what amusement we could find in mine host's kitchen.

We found plenty of company, chiefly collected round a young Bretonne, who had recently returned from Paris, whither she had been taken as a servant by a family in the neighbourhood. Of course, her accounts of all the wonderful things she had seen and heard were listened to with the most eager curiosity by her untravelled auditory. We were exceedingly amused at some of her descriptions of things and places, but every now and then she broke off into Breton, and then her experiences were lost to us. It was clear that Paris was very far from being an object of her admiration. In fact, a violent access of "maladie de pays" was the cause of her return to her native town. The bustle, the noise, the danger of being run over, the hurry every one was in, the impossibility of stopping in the street to gossip a little with a neighbour, and, above all, the irreligion of the people, inspired her with the utmost disgust.

The garden of the Tuileries, however, she admired excessively. It was quite charming; and so full of beautiful figures of saints, that it absolutely made her arm ache with crossing herself as she passed before them.

This seemed to amuse an old man, who was sitting by himself in a corner of the fire-place so much that my curiosity was attracted to him, and we took our seats on his bench. It was not difficult to find out in a very little time all that the old fellow had to tell about himself and his concerns. He was a veteran of the "grande armée," and lived, he said, with his eleven children upon his "rentes," which amounted to eleven hundred francs, equivalent to £44. He was of course full of his reminiscences and achievements, and wished nothing better than to be listened to. "Nous nous avons souvent battus ensemble moi et Vilainton," he began; and we should doubtless have had a choice collection of camp anecdotes and adventures, but that the old soldier was interrupted by another ancient on the other side of the fire, asking us from what part of the country we had come.

The old "moustache," in a rage at being interrupted, told him not to insult strangers by asking such impertinent questions. The other replied that he had not the least inten-

tion of being insolent, and that he considered it far more insulting to fancy that such a question as his could be felt as an insult. I thought this rather a good answer; but it by no means satisfied our self-elected defender; and a vehement quarrel ensued, as to which ought to be supposed to know most of good manners. The one recounted all the countries he had visited, all the fields he had fought, and all the generals he had served under. The other replied triumphantly that he had been six months in Paris. The soldier called the civilian a brutal Breton horse; and the latter retorted by appealing to the bystanders whether his opponent were any thing better than a drunken old "cochon" of the grande armée. So anxious was either to prove his claim to superior politeness! The dispute was loud, long, and furious; but there did not appear on either side the smallest intention of coming to blows. The turmoil ended at length by the old soldier's arrival at the bottom of his pitcher of cider; upon which he observed that he was not used to such society, and so retreated from the field.

The remainder of the evening passed more peaceably; and the jest and laugh went round merrily, and sundry anecdotes were related and stories told, chiefly in Breton, but

all evidently of a comic nature. In this respect, the peasant of the "pays de Treguier" differs essentially from his neighbour of Finistere. The imagination and feelings of the latter are all of a sombre and gloomy cast, and the tales and traditions of the country are deeply impressed with this character. The popular stories current in the pays de Treguier are mostly of another stamp; and, as it is curious to trace the differences of character existing between two portions of the same people, living so near each other, and under so many similar circumstances, I will give a specimen of the style of fables so common among the peasants of this district.

The same story is cited by M. Souvestre, with very trifling variation, from that which I heard at Treguier; and, in all the points where my version was imperfect (which it was very likely to be, since the teller spoke Breton, and it reached me only through a chance interpreter), I have completed it from his.

Once upon a time there lived in a village, not far from Treguier, a young peasant, named Troadec. He was alone in the world, without father or mother, and so poor that frequently dinner and supper were all one with him, and no great matter either. But,

if he had little to eat, he had as little to care about, and his heart was as light as his wallet. He was, in short, a merry, careless fellow, eating the galette when he could get it, and sleepin [illegible] un when he had nothing; alw [illegible] a laugh or a song, and a [illegible] le with the girls of the village. [illegible] sort of way, Troadec lived in the commune where he was born for nearly twenty yea[illegible] and then it came into his head one day that it was a great pity such a pretty fellow as he should live and die a poor man in a country village; and so he resolved to go and seek his fortune in foreign parts. So, one fine morning, without saying so much as "God's blessing on you!" to any one, he took his "penbas," and a wallet, and rosary, and away he went.

He had walked nearly all day, and had arrived in a perfectly strange country, where every thing around him was different from what he had ever seen before; and, being very thirsty, and having a few sous in his pocket, he had determined to treat himself to a pitcher of cider at the next village he came to, when two very poor men met him, and begged him to bestow an alms on them for the love of Christ.

"It is impossible to refuse any thing to



that name," said Troadec. "There—that's all I have; take it, and God speed you!"

He had hardly got the words out of his mouth, when the ragged figures of the two beggars became suddenly radiant with light, so that all the air around seemed to glow with the brightness. The taller of the two figures then said to Troadec, who stood gaping, with the proffered sous in his hand—"Thank you, my fine fellow; I am Saint Paul, and this is my worthy friend, Saint Peter. You are a good boy, and your charitable dispositions shall not go unrewarded. Name the three wishes which sit nearest to your heart, and they shall be granted immediately."

St. Peter upon this winked at Troadec, and, nudging him under the ribs with his elbow, whispered to him to ask for a place in Paradise.

But, without paying the least attention to good St. Peter's suggestion, or giving himself a moment to turn the matter over in his mind, Troadec replied boldly, taking off his cap at the same time:

"Since you are so kind, St. Paul, as to think of a poor lad like me, and offer me so great a favour, I will have a young and beautiful wife, a pack of cards which will always win, and a bag which will hold the devil."

"Those are your wishes, are they?" said St. Paul. "Very well; they are your's." And with those words the two figures vanished.

Troadec put his sous back again in his pocket, and pursued his way till nightfall; when he arrived at a noble palace, in a beautiful wood. He knocked at the door, to see whether he could find employment there; and was answered by an old woman, who cried out as soon as she saw him:—

"Lord bless us! why here is another! What! so you, too, must try your luck! Well! come in, though you are only coming to your destruction."

Poor Troadec could make neither head nor tail of this; but he entered the palace boldly, and there it was explained to him that the place was haunted by demons; and that the lord of the castle had promised the princess his daughter in marriage to any body who would free his house of the devils. He was then taken into a large chamber, where he was told he must pass the night. The old woman, to encourage him, pointed to a very long line of boots and shoes, reaching almost all round the room; and told him that those were the boots and shoes of all the people who had tried the adventure, and perished in the attempt. There were the sabots of pea-

sants, the clouted shoes of artizans, and the smart boots of gentlemen, all left there an ominous warning to the adventurous aspirants to the hand of the princess, and a memorial of the fate of their predecessors.

"There, young man," said the old dame, "your sabots will be placed there to-morrow morning by the side of those boots, which belonged to the poor young gentleman who slept in that bed last night. Now I must leave you to your fate, and so God speed you!"

Troadec was not at all cast down by the sight of the long line of boots and shoes which garnished the side of the large room. So he eat up the supper they brought him with right good will; and then carefully putting his knapsack under his pillow, undressed himself, said his prayers, and jumped into the fatal bed.

He slept sound enough till about the middle of the night, when all of a sudden there was the most terrible noise that ever Christian ears heard; and down the chimney came tumbling a long string of devils holding on to one another like a string of onions, and chattering, shrieking, laughing, and squalling, in the most devilish manner imaginable. They all sprung upon the floor, and began running

about the room in every direction. One put a table in the middle of the room, another brought chairs, and a third placed candles upon the table, and lighted them by touching the wicks with the tip of his tail.

They then called out to Troadec, who had been observing these preparations with no small curiosity. "Wake up, there, dog of Christian! and come here and play with each of us for your soul!"

"With all my heart!" cried Troadec, jumping out of bed; "I should like no better fun." And, so saying, he looked into his knapsack, which was under his pillow, and there he found, sure enough, as he expected, the pack of cards St. Paul had promised him. So he pulled them out, and went with good heart to the table to play with the devils for his soul.

The biggest of the devils sat down at the table; Troadec sat opposite to him, and at it they went. But the game was soon over, for the devil never once had a chance; and, as soon as he was beaten, Troadec laid hold of him by the horns, and crammed him into his knapsack. A second devil then sat down to play with no better luck; and so on with a third and a fourth, till one after another all the devils had tried their hand at St. Paul's

cards, and had all been poked into Troadec's knapsack as the penalty of losing. He then fastened up the knapsack carefully, and returned to bed to sleep out the remainder of the night in peace.

At break of day, as soon as the cocks began to crow, and there was light enough for the girls to find the eyeholes to lace their boddices, the old woman came to the chamber-door to see if the stranger were yet alive.

"Ay, ay! mother! I'm alive," cried Troadec; "and now let all the blacksmiths in the country be sent for directly, for I have work for them."

This was done accordingly. And, when all the Vulcans with their sledge-hammers were come, Troadec put his knapsack on an anvil, and said, "Now, my lads, hammer away at that, like good uns. And, if you should hear the devil's own noise come out of the knapsack, don't you be frightened, but whack away till I tell you to stop."

The blacksmiths then went at it, hammering away in good earnest; and the devils inside, who were being smashed, made a noise like a thousand cart-wheels that wanted greasing. Troadec gave them a good bout of it, and then told the blacksmiths to stop hammering, while he spoke to the devils. He

told them that, if they would agree never to come back to earth any more to torment Christians, he would let them out. They were glad enough to make this bargain, and, accordingly, were let out, and sneaked off, limping home.

Troadec having thus delivered the mansion from the devils, married the princess, who was as lovely as the stars, and thought himself the happiest of men.

But human happiness is like the grass of the field, which is to-day flourishing, and to-morrow is cut down! Just so was poor Troadec cut off in the midst of his felicity; for, at the end of one year after he married the beautiful princess, he died.

When he found himself dead, however, he knew it could not be helped, so he did not trouble his mind much about it, but began to look around him in the other world. There he saw before him two roads, one broad and easy, and pleasant-looking, along which there were as many people passing as if there were a fair in the neighbourhood. The other was a narrow, difficult-looking path, all up hill.

Troadec, who loved taking things easy, and was fond of society, took the high-road. He had not travelled far before he came to a wide gate at the end of the road. He knocked at

the door, and a voice, which any one might know to be Beelzebub's, cried out, "Who's there?"

"It's I," said the dead man; "I, Troadec: open the door."

"Get out of that," said the devil. "We have had enough of you before, and we don't want you here. You are too bad for us, my fine fellow; so be off with you."

When he heard this, there was nothing else to be done but to turn back, and try the other road. After travelling by this for some time, he arrived at the entrance of heaven. Here he knocked again, and St. Peter looked out of the wicket to see who was there.

"What! it is you, Troadec, is it! What do you want here, pray?"

"I am come to seek my place," said Troadec.

"There is no place for you here," replied St. Peter. "You refused to ask a place in Paradise when you might have had it for asking. And now you may go and apply elsewhere." And St. Peter shut the wicket.

Poor Troadec was now rather at a standstill, and felt somewhat at a loss where to go, as neither angels nor devils would have him. But he was one of those fellows who, if they fell from the moon, would always fall on their

legs; and he determined to try again to get into Paradise before he gave it up as a bad job. So he took off his cap, and with both hands flung it over the wall as far into Paradise as he could; and then knocked at the gate again.

St. Peter once more asked what he wanted.

"Just open the door," said Troadec, "and let me go and fetch my cap, that I threw over in a moment of rage, when you shut the door in my face."

"No! no!" said St. Peter; "a sensible man never parts with his cap. You cannot come in."

"In that case," said Troadec, "my cap will remain there till the day of judgment, to keep me a place, and then you will be obliged to let me in among the blessed."

St. Peter seemed much struck by this; and after a moment's consideration opened the door, saying, "There! make haste then, and get your cap; but come back directly."

But, when he was once inside the door, he began to run like a horse turned into a new pasture.

"St. Peter," he cried, "a wise man never parts with his cap. And for the future I do not mean to budge from mine."

And so saying he sat down on it, like a

tailor on his board. At this the saints began to laugh; and the Holy Virgin, who could not help smiling, told them to let him stay where he was.

And from that time Troadec remains sitting on his cap in Paradise, waiting for the last judgment.

Such is the history of a Breton hero of romance; a fair specimen of the stories popular among the people in this part of the country; and remarkable, chiefly, as contrasted with the tone and style of those of another part of Britanny, which we shall have occasion to notice hereafter. In both cases, these rustic inventions may be taken as exponents of the character of the people among whom they are current.

M. Souvestre gives the hero the name of "Moustache," and he remarks on the story: "On voit qu' il y a dans le dénouement de l 'histoire de Moustache quelque chose de singulièrement hardi. Cette manière d' escamoter le Paradis et de faire passer une âme à la porte du ciel, comme un mouton de fraude aux barrières de l' octroi, est plus plaisante qu'orthodoxe; et le Saint Pierre de l' histoire Bretonne ne le cède guère en bonhomie a celui de notre Béranger. Sans doute tous le récits de nos paysans ne sont pas aussi peu réréren-

cieux pour les choses saintes ; mais à part cette nuance philosophique un peu vive, l' histoire de Moustache résume admirablement le conte gai de la litérature armoricaine. Aucun autre modèle n'en donnerait une idée plus exacte. La fable peut varier, les personnages changer de noms ; mais toujours vous trouverez le joyeux garçon, fringant et avisé, qui va par les chemins, cherchant aventure, et qui finit par épouser une princesse, après avoir joué quelque mauvais tour au diable. Car le diable est la victime obligée du fabliau bas-breton ; dans le genre plaisant comme dans le genre terrible, sa figure est celle qui domine tout ; elle est le pivot du drame."

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lannion—Condition of the Country—Appearance of the Town—Power of the Priests—Anecdote—District near the Mouth of the Guer—Numerous Antiquities there—Residence of King Arthur—Dispute respecting his Place of Burial—Explanation of the Superstition of his existence in Fairy Land—Christianization of Druidical Idols—"Dolmen"—Rocking Stone—Hypotheses concerning them—Remarkable Tract of Country—"La Roche pendue"—Details of the Interior of a Peasant's Cottage—Hospitality—Conscription in Britanny—"Maladie du Pays"—Anecdotes of Young Conscripts—An Invitation—Ancient City of Lexobia.

The next morning we walked from Treguier to Lannion—the capital of the most western arrondissement of the Côtes du Nord. The distance is about four leagues and a half, and we therefore got to our journey's end in good time for breakfast.

The country we passed through had more appearance of prosperity, and is better cultivated, than any district we have yet seen. The cottages were better built and more comfortable, and in most of them plenty of sides of fat bacon were stowed between the rafters of the kitchen-roof. There are in this district

many rich farmers; several possess the land they cultivate, and we heard of some worth thirty thousand francs a year.

It is known, however, from official returns, that the total quantity of meat consumed in the capital town of the arrondissement is 150,000 kilogrammes annually, which gives twenty-eight pounds and a half (French) to each inhabitant. From which it would seem, that the air of plenty and well-being which appear to characterize the country are far from being general, or that this arrondissement appeared rich to us, only by comparison with other still poorer districts. In fact, however great a degree of poverty the above-cited consumption of animal food may seem to indicate, I cannot doubt that in the arrondissement of Loudeac, and generally in the hill districts, they consume less still.

Lannion is a little, closely built town, very dirty, and very picturesque, situated on the banks of the river Guer, about three leagues from its mouth. The Guer is navigable below Lannion for small vessels, and the town has a neat little quay, with an open space adjoining it planted with trees, and used as a promenade.

But the more ancient and interesting part of the town is the interior, especially the mar-

ket-place, where there are several very old wooden houses, with the different stories projecting each beyond the one immediately below it. The fronts of several are ornamented with a profusion of little wooden figures, about three feet high, quaintly coloured. In some, the projections of the different stories are supported by grotesquely carved wooden caryatides and monsters. In short, to the sketchers of picturesque architecture, Lannion would afford a good week's employment.

The walls with which this town, once the capital of a country, which gave its title to one of the oldest families of Britanny, the Counts of Lannion, Seigneurs di Quinipili, de Cruguil, et du Vieux-Châtel, are no longer in existence. But the whole aspect of the place remains that of a town closely compressed within the unelastic bounds of military fortifications. The streets are narrow and tortuous, and the houses high; and the only open space within the town has been obtained by pulling down the ancient market-hall; a measure, which is said to have contributed much to the general healthiness of the population.

As might naturally have been anticipated, in a place built in this manner, Lannion was

one of the towns that suffered most from the cholera, when it passed over Britanny. Frightful as were its ravages in every part of this province, less prepared as it was with means of resisting the dread invader, than almost any other part of Europe, the desolation it spread in Lannion and the neighbouring communes was especially tremendous. In a few days only, the fifteenth part of the population of the town had perished.

During this period of universal terror and consternation, there occurred at Lannion a circumstance, recorded by M. Souvestre, which, striking in itself, is yet more so as characteristic of the people, and of the boundless authority exercised over them by their priests.

A poor woman of the labouring class was attacked with the malady, and the doctor and the priest were sent for. For in Britanny the latter is a far more invariable attendant on these occasions than the former. It is but justice to the Breton clergy to allow that, if they are interested and ignorant, they are at least not neglectful of their flock, in those periods of danger and distress, when men are apt most earnestly to cling to the support and consolations, which it is their mission to offer. No position in the social scale is so abject as

to be overlooked by the Breton priest; no pestilence so deadly as to fright him from his duty, and no circumstances of misery so squalid as to forbid his presence. Wherever misfortune, sickness, and death, are busy with suffering humanity, there will be found the priest active in the scene of his especial calling.

On the occasion above-mentioned, the duty of the medical man was soon over. He had but to look upon his patient, pronounce the utter absence of all chance of recovery, and depart. Not so, however, the priest. After many words of comfort, and much of exhortation, the suffering woman being left alone with the priest, summoned all her remaining energies to make the last and particular confession of her sins, before receiving absolution and the last sacraments.

Her shrift was not a long one, and was followed as usual by the full and confident absolution of all repented sins, which our Saviour has commissioned the authorized ministers of his church to pronounce; and by the other rights, which that of Rome has invented, with the view of rendering yet more impressive the last awful moments of human life. But, when the priest turned from the straw pallet on which the dying woman lay,

there was that in the expression of his face, which shewed him not fully satisfied with the result of the solemn office he had just performed. And it was after a minute of apparent doubt and hesitation, that he beckoned aside an old woman, who, from a ready charity never wanting among these poor people upon such occasions, had come in to perform the last necessary duties to her dying neighbour.

He was observed to speak to the old woman at considerable length in a low but earnest voice, and with increasing vehemence as he drew to the close of what he was saying. The woman listened to him with the profound and submissive reverence with which the peasants are wont to hear the words of him whom they deem the immediate exponent of the will of Heaven, but with very evident dislike of the communication made to her. She wept much; she joined her hands in prayer; she mixed her supplications to heaven's minister, with prayers to his heavenly master; she fell upon her knees before him.

The priest, though by no means unmoved, appeared inexorable, and, in answer to all her intreaties, replied in a loud voice, and with hand upraised to heaven: — "Woman, it is the will of God." She made no farther opposition, but her head fell upon her breast with

an appearance of the deepest agony, as she rejoined:—"Then, His will be done!"

The clergyman again turned towards the bed, with the intention of renewing his exhortations and ghostly consolation. But, though the lingering spirit still imparted to each quivering nerve the faculty of suffering, amid the general wreck reason had left the helm, and the account of passions, sufferings, responsibilities, and repentance, was closed. The priest's office was, therefore, at an end. And, perceiving that the passing soul was already beyond his care, he placed a small and rude crucifix upon her breast, and departed.

She lingered some hours, latterly, to all appearance, without pain. Her old and sole attendant remained, with terror in her looks, and with clasped hands, on her knees in prayer, almost ceaselessly since the departure of the priest.

Towards midnight the sufferer started suddenly into an upright position in the bed, uttered a sharp cry, and fell back dead.

The old nurse sprung suddenly upon her feet, and, with horror in every feature, and a desperate and high-wrought energy in her eye, approached the bed. She placed her hand upon the corpse, and for an instant ap-

peared to hesitate in her purpose; but, muttering a short invocation, and crossing herself, she seemed to rally all her utmost strength, and, with a violence which had more of the nature of frenzy in it than of steady determination, flung from the discoloured corpse the squalid rags which covered it.

Again she paused during a moment of indecision; aud again the remembrance of the priest's words and of her promise to him urged her on.

"Dieu le veut! Dieu le veut!" she shrieked, as, snatching up a large knife, she plunged it into the already stiffening corpse, laid open with mad violence the entire entrails at one tremendous gash, and drew forth from the ghastly wound in the mutilated corpse the blood-stained body of a babe unborn, but instinct with life.

Rapidly the holy sign was made, and the saving words of baptism were said by the trembling voice of the old woman; and, having thus fulfilled her dreadful task, she sank lifeless beside the corpse on the bloody bed.

The priest's behest was done; the innocent soul of whose existence, he had been made aware by the dying mother's confession, had been saved according to his creed, from un-

dying tortures by these frightful means, and been rendered the interior of eternal bliss. But his object was accomplished at the expense of the life of his unfortunate agent.

The next day she became violently delirious; and was continually haunted by the vision of the young mother, livid from the dread disease of which she died, and ghastly from the mutilation her hand had perpetrated, demanding the infant torn by traitorous violence from her womb, and threatening the violater of the corpse with the vengeance of heaven against a crime deemed by the Breton peasants peculiarly heinous.

On the third day she died.

Might not this strange tale be supposed an extract from some monastic chronicler of the middle ages, rather than an anecdote of comparatively recent occurrence in a town of France? Do not the circumstances savour more of the unflinching faith and energetic fanaticism of the high-handed ecclesiastics of the twelfth or thirteenth century, than of the politic caution of the worldly Romanism of the nineteenth? And to how much of all that a traveller hears and sees in Britanny might a similar remark apply!

The Emperor of Austria possesses, in a park near Vienna, a castle most curiously fitted

up, as a complete specimen of a feudal residence of the middle ages. But here in France we have the far more interesting curiosity of a people, among whom are preserved almost as completely the moral sentiments, feelings, and prejudices, of the same period.

We remained only two days besides that of our arrival at Lannion; and those were devoted to two excursions from the town, one towards the coast, and the other inland, along the river Guer, or Leguer — for it is written both ways.

To those who love to busy their imaginations with the vague and uncertain traditions of the misty period, when history and fable, like the sea and sky in the extreme distance of a far-stretching landscape, mix inextricably together, and to wander amid the localities to which they relate, no spot of this province, so rich every where in traditionary lore, can afford a greater treat than the district enclosed by the river Guer from its mouth to Lannion, the road from that town to the little sea-port of Perros-Guirec and the sea.

The whole of this little peninsula is storied ground, full of objects, which recall the memory of the days when the romantic poetry of modern Europe was cradled, and of the

personages who assisted at her birth. Numerous monuments, of a yet earlier period, are scattered throughout the same tract of country, with a profusion remarkable even in this land so redolent everywhere of the past. In short, this small district may be considered in some sort a resumé of the characteristics of the whole country — a museum, in which are assembled specimens of the memorials left behind them by every one of the several races who have succeeded each other in the possession of the land.

For the political revolutions of mankind pass not away without leaving a débris behind them, which, like that of the physical changes of the earth, may be recognised and reasoned on. And, in this country, where the relics of its former inhabitants, and the silent operation of the lapse of ages, have been so little interfered with by the disturbing hand of man, it frequently occurs that several strata of antiquities, the remains of successive generations, may be traced in the same spot, like the different beds of geological formations.

It was, therefore, with eager curiosity and excited imaginations, that we started from Lannion on the road to Perros-Guirec. This little port, which is the "chef-lieu" of a can-

ton, is about three leagues from the town; and the good road which now leads thither is said to have been made by the Duc d'Aiguillon, in order to facilitate his visits to a beautiful aubergiste, who lived there.

We did not avail ourselves long of the advantages procured, but turned off to visit the chateau of Kerduel, which is situated in the parish of Pleumeur-Bodou. Those who think that there is nothing in a name, may save themselves the trouble of this visit; for, to tell the truth, Kerduel has now little else to boast of.

But the lovers of early romance will hardly think that labour lost which places them on a spot so celebrated in the chronicles of the period as the favourite residence of King Arthur. Here places and names surround us, with which the romances of the round table have made us familiar, but to which Fancy has assigned a locality in fairy-land rather than in any veritable portion of the earth's surface. Here the half-fictitious personages, whose adventures have in so many forms amused us, and the mystic performers of those deeds, which have bequeathed to Europe an heroical literature of her own, have "a local habitation and a name."

"Here it was," says M. de Freminville,

" that Arthur, surrounded by his noble peers, Lancelot, and Tristan, and Karadec, and Yvain, and the rest, held a brilliant court, of which his wife, Guenarc'han, and the beautiful Brangwain, were the ornament and pride.

It is thus that M. de Freminville, a competent Celtic scholar, writes these names, which we have been accustomed to see metamorphosed into Genièvre, or Guinever, and Brangien. Guenarc'han, it seems, means " white as silver."

The reminiscences attached to Kerduel are not the only ones in this neighbourhood which relate to King Arthur, if the antiquaries of this country may be believed.

There is, at no great distance from this spot, and just off the coast, a little isle, called Agalon, or Avalon. And here, as the Bretons most jealously maintain, and not at Glastonbury, according to the more generally received tradition, was the tomb of the monarch.

The monks of Glastonbury offered to prove to Henry II. that they were in possession of King Arthur's dust, by opening the place of his sepulture. This was accordingly done, and a large, flat stone was found, upon which was a leaden cross and this inscription: " Hic jacet sepultus inclitus rex Arturius in insula

Avalonia." This was received as conclusive proof; but it is maintained that this pretended discovery was an imposture of the monks, who had themselves buried the stone a little while previous to the investigation which they themselves proposed.

It is certain—at least as certain as any thing can be relating to a period so remote, and at best but semi-historic — that Arthur possessed dominions in Britanny as well as in Wales; and the country between the rivers Jaudy and Guer is supposed by M. de Freminville to have been ruled by him during the early part of the sixth century. In the romances which celebrate his adventures, we find him as often in one country as in the other.

The well-known fable of his existence in fairy-land, and his return at some future period to rule again over his faithful Celts on either side the Channel—a tradition firmly believed by the peasants in some parts of Britanny to the present day — has been explained under the hypothesis of his having died in the Breton Avalon in this manner. The fairy Morgain, whose name ought to be written Mor-gwen, and means "whiteness of the sea," was a Druid priestess living in that island. It is known that these mysterious

priestesses usually dwelt on the most wild and savage promontories of this rugged coast, or in the still more inaccessible islands which surround it. On that shore of the isle of Avalon which is opposite to the main land, there are extensive quicksands; and the supporters of this explanation think that Arthur's loss among these, upon some occasion when his love of the chase, or some other adventure, had taken him to this mysterious and sacred isle, was poetized by the imaginative bards of those days into the story of the fairy Morgwen having detained him prisoner in her enchanted isle.

From Kerduel we walked to Perros-Guirec, and there breakfasted, and then proceeded towards Tregastel. It is a very remarkable line of coast, presenting, without any of the grandeur and sublimity of high cliffs, a scene of savage wildness and rugged barrenness, which I have rarely seen equalled.

Wherever, from the shape of the coast, a particular tract of land is in any degree cut off from communication with the rest of the country, wherever the nature of the soil and the elements have conspired to make a spot the appropriate abode of solitude and desolation, there will be found in greatest number those extraordinary monuments, almost as

imperishable as the works of Nature herself, which exist in more or less abundance in every part of Lower Britanny. It is such spots as these that the Druids appear to have made especially their own, and to have deemed most adapted to the ceremonies of their gloomy religion.

In the district I have been describing, accordingly, many Druidical monuments yet exist. Not far from Pleumeur, to the south, is one of the largest menhirs in the country. It is twenty-five feet high; and it has been calculated by the cubage of it to weigh 195,740 pounds (French). This enormous mass was evidently, M. de Freminville thinks, one of those which were raised as an emblem of the divinity; and it is now especially curious, as bearing a striking evidence of the means resorted to, by the early preachers of Christianity in this country, to turn the religious feelings of the people from idolatry to the true faith.

A small stone cross is raised on the top, and one of the faces of the stone is carved into a variety of the emblems of Christianity. It was thus that the apostles of Armorica sought to divert, in form at least, the worship which they could not prevent the people from offering to these stones, to the symbols of a

truer faith. At least, while the worshipper knelt at the feet of the monstrous idol which his fathers had believed to be the representative of their God, his eyes might rest on the pictured passion of the true Saviour; and the grace which was supposed to be inherent in these sacred emblems might, it was hoped, in process of time, transfer to the religion of whose history they were symbolical the rude reverence and indiscriminating worship of the mind, to whose contemplation they were habitually presented in the moments of its untaught, but earnest devotion.

At no great distance from this remarkable menhir, there exists a large dolmen. This is the name given to another species of Druidical monument, of which the specimens, though not so numerous as the menhirs, are by no means rare in Britanny. The word is derived from the Celtic "Taal"—table; and "maen," or "men"—stone. And the name very accurately describes their appearance. These dolmens, or table-stones, consist, in fact, of one large flat mass, supported by several upright stones; and they are supposed to have served as altars, in all probability, for the immolation of human victims. A circumstance that seems to confirm this supposition is, that the surfaces of the dolmens are very

frequently traversed by small trenches cut in the stone, apparently for the purpose of carrying off the blood.

The dolmen in question is near a hamlet called Kerguntuy, on the borders of the parishes of Pleumeur and Tregastel. The platform is a tolerably regular quadrangular figure, twenty feet long, by ten feet wide. And in front of it there is a sort of inclosure, or avenue, formed of several upright stones, probably intended to inclose a sort of sanctuary in front of the altar. A similar arrangement of stones has been observed very generally to accompany the larger dolmens.

As if it were really intended that the canton of Perros-Guirec should constitute a museum, in which might be found at least one specimen of every kind of monument to be seen in the country, the traveller has only to walk a short distance from Kerguntuy towards Perros, to meet with one of those works of the Druids, termed rocking-stones, which, far more extraordinary than their menhirs and dolmens, are, perhaps, the most difficult problem that antiquity offers to our speculations.

Several of these exist in different parts of Britanny, and always, I believe, in the neighbourhood of other Druidical remains.

They consist of a large mass of stone, so placed upon another mass as to oscillate sensibly when acted on by a force which would be totally incapable of imparting motion to it, if placed in any other position. But, though the huge weight is so accurately balanced that a man's hand may move it, it would require a very considerable power to dislodge it from its position.

The purpose for which these stones could have been so arranged, and the means by which a primitive people, ignorant, as we cannot but suppose them to have been, of most of those mechanical appliances by which such a feat might be accomplished by modern science, could have raised such enormous masses, and, stranger still, have succeeded in poising them so justly and accurately as has been described, is indeed incomprehensible.

The rocking-stone of Perros-Guirec is the largest in Britanny. It is upwards of twenty feet long; and its weight has been estimated from the cubage at not less than a million of pounds.

In looking at this wonderful monument, it struck me that it was possible for the phenomenon to have been produced without recourse having been had to the enormous labour of lifting the huge block into its

position. If we can suppose nature to have placed one upon the other, a circumstance which so often occurs in rocky districts such as this, where, in fact, many such may be observed, the property of oscillating upon a pivot, as this does, may have been imparted to it by cutting away the base of the upper stone.

As to the purpose for which these rocking-stones could have been raised or contrived, various conjectures have been offered, in the total absence of the slightest indication on the subject from either history or tradition. The most apparently probable of these seems to be the idea that the Druids drew oracles from the number of oscillations, accurately counted, which the stone made when set in movement, before it again rested on its pivot in a state of perfect repose.

Others have supposed that the guilt or innocence of an accused person was determined by the experiment, whether he could cause the stone to oscillate or not; while the exact point at which it was necessary to touch it, in order to produce this movement, was known only to the Druids themselves, who would thus keep in their own hands the power of acquittal or condemnation. But this supposes the stone to be still more artfully con-

trived than many of them are, as the mass in question, like many others, may be made to vibrate by a small effort applied to any part of it.

At one point of the coast of this remarkable district, in the parish of Tregastel, near the little storm-swept chapel of St. Anne, the scenery is striking and peculiar to an unusual degree. The whole coast, and the country inwards for about a mile or rather more, has the appearance of a perfect sea of rocks. A chaos of masses of all sizes, from a circumference of four or five feet up to one of as many hundreds, cover the soil in all directions. In many places there is, indeed, no soil; and the loose masses rest on a bare bed of living rock, stretching in unbroken extent for several hundred yards. All this immense quantity of rock is red granite, very similar to that of Egypt in colour, but I think of a somewhat coarser and more friable quality.

A wanderer amid this strange and silent scene might fancy himself the only living thing in the midst of a world turned to stone. In every possible variety of uncouth form and capricious strange position, the endless masses were around us, as we lay down to rest awhile under the shade of one of them, and amused ourselves with giving the rein to Fancy, and,

permitting her to mark the strange grotesque resemblances to various organic objects which the outlines of many of these brute forms seemed to present. Here was the huge back and head of a colossal elephant; and there the sharp jaws and unwieldy length of an enormous crocodile lay slumbering beneath a gigantic death's head, whose gaunt figure was mimicked by the outlines and hollows of the rock with a degree of accuracy perfectly startling. Living faces, too, were there, which, as the eye rested on them stedfastly, seemed to assume increased distinctness and strange expression. Then innumerable monsters, to which no known form could be assigned, but whose hideous heads and frightful combinations of limbs and features were portrayed by the quaint caprice of Nature's endless forms, reminded one of those huge saurian tribes, of which geologists tell us —earth's earliest children.

Among this world of rocks there is one celebrated in the neighbourhood for its size and remarkable position. It is called "la Roche pendue," and rises from the edge of the water when the tide is out. At high water it is inaccessible, except by a boat. This rock consists of a vast mass of red granite, of nearly square form, crowning a

mighty pile of still larger masses, which rise to a very considerable height. These may, with some difficulty, be climbed, and then the climber stands at the immediate foot of "la Roche pendue" itself, which towers above him some thirty or forty feet. On one side this rock presents a surface of clean red granite; on the other it is entirely overgrown with green and black moss. Its isolated and towering form is seen many a mile at sea, and serves as a well-known mark to the fishermen and sailors of the coast, warning them to avoid the dangerous and inhospitable headland of which it forms the extreme point.

This stone naturally rests on a very small base, the lower part of it having been undermined apparently by the action of the waves, which reach its foot in rough weather, and at spring-tides. And I should think that, provided the work could be done with sufficient skill and exactitude to avoid precipitating the mass from its position, a small expense of labour might suffice to render this a rocking-stone.

Among the rocks which cover the greatest part of this coast, there are scattered here and there a few fields of cultivated ground, which, oddly enough, the peasants say are peculiarly fertile.

In returning from the "Roche pendue," we asked our way to Tregastel of an old man who was working on one of these little oases in this stony desert. He was bare-headed and bare-footed, and appeared in every way quite a poor man. He turned out, however, to be the proprietor of the fields he cultivated, and, as he said, very well to do in the world. He immediately quitted his occupation, saying that he would show us the way to the village, but begged us first to come to his house and eat some crêpe, and drink milk. The crêpe is a sort of cake, which in this part of the country stands in the place of the galette before described, to which it is far superior.

We accepted his hospitable invitation, and walked with him to a little farm-house at no great distance.

The term "farm-house," however, in all probability, suggests to an English reader the idea of a very different dwelling to that which we now entered. One sole apartment served for all the purposes of all the family, and constituted the entire house; which was yet far superior in comfort and cleanliness to many of the hill farm-houses, seeing that it was not shared by the cattle.

There were, as usual, the two box-bed

steads on either side of the fire-place, from the top of one of which was hanging the "Bransel," or little cradle, in which the peasants suspend their infants over their heads during the night. Two other similar bedsteads, the resting-places of the younger branches of the family, were placed on either side lower down. In front of all four of them were the customary chests, forming the only accommodation for sitting which the house afforded. Between these was a table, the space beneath which was formed into a sort of cupboard, where the provisions of the family were kept. Immediately over the table hung, by a string from the roof, a large circular basket, about the size and form of a milkpan, with the bottom upwards, whose purpose was to cover the large loaf of black bread which always remains on the table. The string by which this cover is suspended passes through a pulley fixed to the roof, and descends again to a nail placed for the purpose somewhere near the table; so that, when the family are at their meals, the cover is drawn up off the bread, and kept up by turning the string round the nail. When the repast is over, the stationary loaf, which may be some twenty inches in diameter, is again covered.

Another appendage to the table, which is also suspended from the roof at such a height as to be out of the way, but yet within reach, is a small circular wooden frame, something like a rudely carved crown, round which are ranged the wooden spoons of each of the family, who thus have them always ready for use, and invariably return them to their repository when they have done eating.

All these trifling particulars would not have been worth mentioning, if they had been peculiar to the residence of our Tregastel friend. But they may be taken as a general description of the dwellings of the peasants, and poorer farmers in this part of the country.

All the family, consisting of our host's wife, and grown up son, and several younger children, were sitting over the embers on the hearth when we entered, but they all immediately rose to make room for us on the seats of honour — the uppermost chests on either side of the fire. The farmer then spoke to his wife in Breton, who forthwith produced the promised crêpe and milk in ample quantities. We were tolerably sharp-set after our seaside ramble, but still had some difficulty in satisfying the hospitable expectations of our host, who kept entreating us to eat more, despite our protestations that it was quite

impossible for us to do so. He was the only one of the family who spoke French, and his was very imperfect. He asked a great many questions about the state of public affairs, and was especially curious to know whether there was likely to be any war. For his second son, he told us, had been drawn as a conscript two years ago, and he was very anxious about his safety. He had been to Lannion, and had heard there that there had been riots in Paris, and he feared that his son might have been there.

However great a hardship the conscription may be in other parts of France, its effects are elsewhere light and trifling in comparison with the affliction it produces in Britanny. The affection of the Breton peasant for his native country, as is the case in other similar instances, is strong in proportion to the smallness of the benefits for which he has to thank her. Transport him to a land smiling with rich corn lands and a glowing vintage, place him beneath the bright sun and serene sky of earth's most favoured clime, and he will pine and sicken for the love of his own gorse-grown hill, and the rude breezes of his own tempestuous coasts.

The doom, which sends him forth from his paternal home and native fields, is, to him,

a sentence which extinguishes every hope, renders existence itself odious to him, and has in many instances proved fatal. One case is recorded in which a Breton regiment, who were quartered in barracks, I forget where, lost a considerable number of men by sickness, entirely brought on by pining for their homes. The hospitals were crowded, and it was thought that it would have been absolutely necessary to have disbanded the regiment, when some clever fellow, more capable probably of comprehending the nature of the feelings under the violence of which these men were perishing than the other medical attendants, bethought him of sending for two or three Breton bagpipers, who were placed beneath the hospital windows, and there directed to play some of the popular national airs. The effect was magical. The sick men dragged themselves from their beds, first to the windows, and soon down to the court below. In every case, health was re-established; and it was found that the continued practice of indulging the men, at a certain hour daily, with the familiar strains of their much loved instrument, afforded a sufficient relief to their overflowing feelings to prevent a recurrence of the disastrous consequences of their total suppression.

It must be observed that the Breton feels himself as much expatriated in the busy streets of Paris, or the fertile fields of Normandy, as he would beneath the burning sun of Egypt, or among the snows of Russia. To him, France is not his country, but Britanny. However much the lapse of three hundred years may have sufficed to obliterate, among the upper classes and the inhabitants of the towns, the memory and the sentiments of the days when Britanny was an independent sovereignty, the feelings of the peasants, in this as in most other respects, are the same as they were in the middle ages. Nor can it be a matter of surprise that a Bas-Breton should not recognize as countrymen a people, whom he hears speaking a strange language, and sees dressed in an unwonted costume, and whose manners of living and thinking are very different from his own.

No affliction, therefore, is more dreaded, no blow more stunning, when it arrives to these poor peasants, than being drawn for the conscription. I saw, in one of the country fairs, a young man rush into the midst of a crowd, and strike a man at random, without any provocation whatever. He followed it up by behaving in the most outrageous manner, and had nearly succeeded in creating a general

disturbance, when he was seized and marched off by two gend'armes. I learnt, in answer to my inquiries, that he had been drawn as a conscript, and was, therefore, desperate, and determined to do some mischief.

I have been assured that when the young conscripts are obliged to submit the long streaming locks, of which a Breton peasant is so proud, to the unpitying regimental scissors, the operation produces an agony of grief and not unfrequently abundant showers of tears.

But if the pain of parting from their homes is great, the pleasure of return is proportionably so. This restoration of a son to the family who have so bitterly deplored his absence is an occasion of the greatest rejoicing. And then indeed it is shewn that the conscription in Britanny if attended with more pain than elsewhere, is probably productive of less permanent mischief. For it is extraordinary how little change has been operated in the peasant; and the immediate return of the dismissed soldier to the costume, language, and habits of a Breton peasant, is another striking proof of the extreme tenacity of character in this people, and their rooted and unconquerable attachment to the customs and habits of their forefathers.

I met at Quimper, in Finistere, an old Colonel, who pointed out to me, in the market of that town, men in the dress of peasants, who had been through all Napoleon's campaigns, and had risen to the rank of captain in the army; but who had in every respect returned to the manner of life of peasants, the instant they were able to retire, and return once more to their native communes. Their locks, as many as time had spared, were once more suffered to stream over their shoulders; they adopted the peculiar dress of the peasants in that part of the country; and most of them endeavoured to forget the language they had been compelled so long to use, or, if that were impossible, at least refused to speak it.

These circumstances may give the reader an idea of the light in which the conscription is viewed in this part of France; and the anxiety of the poor old farmer of Tregastel for his son's return will be easily understood.

When we at length quitted his hospitable though lowly dwelling, he insisted upon accompanying us to Tregastel to shew us the way. We passed on the road another old man, ragged and filthy, basking in the sun under a rock, an admirable picture of a Breton Silenus. He accosted us, and perceiving that

we did not understand him, made signs, which we understood to imply a request that we would bestow on him wherewithal to buy food. But our guide explained to us that he was inviting us to come and eat at his house, and told us that he also was a farmer, and proprietor of the little bit of land he cultivated. We declined his invitation, on the grounds of having just partaken of his neighbour's hospitality; and, as the steeple of Tregastel was now visible on the top of a slight hill before us, we bade adieu to our kind guide, and left him talking to his neighbour.

From Tregastel we walked in a southern direction towards the site of one of those large and famous cities, of which such frequent mention is made in the old Breton legends. It is between Lannion and the mouth of the Guer, that immemorial tradition has fixed the site of the ancient city of Lexobia. It is a very curious thing that no less than five or six opulent and flourishing cities are spoken of as having existed in ancient Armorica, which have perished from the face of the earth, and left no trace of their ruins upon the soil. Of the famous cities of Ys, Tolente, and Occismor, the mere name survives. The sites of their former existence even are doubtful, and a fruitful subject of dispute to the Breton antiquaries.

Of Lexobia, indeed, it is said that certain foundations of walls and the entrance to a vault may yet be discovered at a spot near the village of Coz-Gueaudet, and that these are sufficient to fix with certainty the position of the town. I confess that to me the trifling remains in question seem to have very little weight in deciding the matter; but the far better evidence of constant tradition makes it probable that something, which may have been deemed an opulent city by those who have preserved the fact of its existence, once stood somewhere near this spot, at some remote period.

Le Baud, the earliest historian of Britanny, says that Lexobia was destroyed in the year 836, by Hasting, the Danish chief; but there seems reason to think that he is confounding it with Treguier, which was sacked by the Danes about that time. The opinion more generally received among the antiquaries of the country, is that it was taken and razed to the ground in the year 786, by one of Charlemagne's generals.

Be this as it may, it is strange to stand in a ploughed field, in the midst of a country cultivated, inhabited, and enjoying the blessings of peace, and to think that on that spot has been a thriving city, and the busy hum,

and the mighty works, the pride and grandeur of men—that there too, as mighty for evil, had passed man the destroyer, and, with the sword and fire, had blasted in a day the labour and industry of many years—and that there too—creation never ceasing, had bounteously hidden the hideous spectacle, and once more had re-adapted the scene to the service and enjoyment of man.

We walked home to Lannion by moonlight, along the course of the Guer, which in some places is pretty enough; but, sooth to say, we were far too tired, and too anxious for the flesh-pots of Lannion, to pay much attention to its beauties.

CHAPTER XXX.

Valley of the Guer—Ruins of Coatfrec—Anecdotes of its History—Walk to Tonquedec—Process of making "Crêpe"—Ruins of Tonquedec—Their Position—Plan of the Building—Walk to Morlaix—"Grève de St. Michel"—Legend of St. Efflam—Hypothesis concerning the Dragons of the Middle Ages—Curious Crypt under Lanmeur Church.

The next day was devoted to a walk up the valley of the Guer, the principal object of which was to visit the ruins of two ancient feodal castles, one of them that of Tonquedec, the finest and most important ruin in Britanny.

On leaving Lannion, we crossed the Guer by an ancient stone bridge, over which passes the high-road to Morlaix. But, immediately on reaching the other bank of the river, we quitted the road, and followed the course of the stream for nearly half a league, at the end of which distance we found the ruins of the chateau of Coatfrec, perfectly embosomed by wood on the top of a knoll overlooking the river. They are so closely shut in as to be

perfectly hidden at a very little distance, and it is impossible from any side to get a good view of the whole of them.

The rooks were performing a grand concert as we ascended the knoll; for, though the family of the ancient lords of Coatfrec has been long since extinct, these birds did not abandon the trees at the time of the downfall of the family.

This castle was a square building, with a strong round tower at each corner. The outward wall of one side, that towards the river, and one of the four towers, remain. It is round on the exterior, and sexagonal within, and of great solidity. The date of the construction of the edifice is supposed from its form to be about the beginning of the fourteenth century.

At the foot of one of the ruined towers there is a sort of well or pit, about thirty feet deep, and entirely lined with masonry. At the bottom of this I could see the arched entrances of subterranean passages, which appear to have branched off from this common centre in different directions. But, if this pit was the only means of access to them, it must have been descended by a ladder.

The lords of Coatfrec do not make any great figure in Breton history, though they

held the rank of banneret. The first lord of Coatfrec, of whom any mention is found, is merely recorded as having been present at a "monstre" of the company of "Messire Geoffrey de Kerimel," which took pláce on the first of June, 1373. The only other record of the family is the mention of one of them, in a list of eighty-eight knights banneret, who sat in the "states" of Britanny, held by Peter II. in 1455.

The good knights of Coatfrec must be supposed to have enjoyed a degree of peace and happiness, rare in those days, to have thus escaped almost unnoticed by those records of calamity, which we term the history of a nation. But the fortunes of the castle, after it quitted their possession, became more bloodstained and glorious. For, during the wars of the League, a garrison, who held possession of it for the king, was surprised there by the too celebrated Fontenelle, who was, in his turn, shortly afterwards compelled to deliver it up by the royal troops at Treguier. The number of different points at which the name of this Fontenelle meets us in every part of Britanny, during the disturbed times of the League, is quite extraordinary. There is scarcely to be found a castle or stronghold throughout the country, which did not change

hands during these wars, many of them two or three times; and I really think that, in the history of the greater part of them, the name of Guy Eder, seigneur de Fontenelle, recurs invariably, coupled with anecdotes of barbarity and outrage.

Above Coatfrec, the valley of the Guer becomes extremely wild and pretty. The course of the stream is serpentine, and very rapid, and the waters every here and there make music, as they ripple over their stony bed. The sides of the ravine, through which they run, are thickly clothed with wood, which at intervals gives place to the richly blossoming broom, so peculiarly luxuriant in this country, among the glowing beds of which a multitude of sober coloured rocks shew their hoary heads, and produce a singular effect by the contrast of their cold grey tints with those of the sea of molten gold around them.

A kind of track, visible here and there, served partially to guide us through the valley; but deserted us ever and anon, in our utmost need, and left us to make our way how we might over every impediment that wood, water, rocks, and marsh, could offer. Tonquedec is, as well as Lannion, on the eastern side of the river. We were obliged, therefore, to recross it before arriving thither.

This we effected, at the distance of some three or four miles above Coatfrec, at a spot where a lonely watermill avails itself of the force of the stream.

On the other side, we mounted the steep acclivity of the little valley, and for awhile quitted the guidance of the river, and found ourselves amid the deep hollow lanes and hedges of a cultivated district. It was a hot blazing day; and, being very thirsty, we went into a farm-house to see if we could get some milk. We found the family very busy making crêpe; but were, nevertheless, received with the greatest hospitality. The peasants, almost invariably, prefer milk which has turned sour, and become curds and whey, to new milk. But they asked us which we would have, and, upon our requesting it fresh, brought forth two immense bowls, one for each of us; into which they were about to put, if we had not stopped them, a huge lump of butter, preparatory to boiling it. They were much surprised at our preferring it unturned, and butterless, and cold. The milk in Britanny is generally, I think, the richest I ever tasted; but, not contented with the delicious creaminess of it, they will always, if you do not prevent them, "gild refined gold," by putting a lump of butter in it.

In this farm-house, which was larger and better, in every respect, than that of our friend at Tregastel, we had an opportunity of witnessing the whole art and mystery of making crêpe, or "crampoosh," as it is called in Breton.

A bright wood fire, constantly supplied with bits of dry, light, fuel, was blazing on the capacious hearth, and, supported on two tripods in the midst of it, were two circular iron plates, about eighteen or twenty inches in diameter. Near the hearth stood a large tub, full of a sort of thin gruel, made of sarrasin flour and new milk; and beside it a wooden bowlful of little balls of butter, about three quarters of an inch in diameter. One of these was seized by the fair fingers of the neat-handed Phillis, who was presiding over the manufacture of the crampoosh, and hastily rubbed over the surface of one of the plates, upon which a cupful of the gruel was then poured. This quickly acquired a degree of consistency. Another ball of butter was rubbed on the surface of it, and the half-formed cake was then most dexterously turned, by means of a long, slender, wooden spatula, kept for the purpose; and in about half a minute one crampoosh was finished. It was then whipped off the plate

with the same instrument which had served to turn it, and added to an immense heap of its predecessors.

This operation was going forward with great activity on both the plates on the fire, and the quantity made seemed quite enormous. But they explained to me that they only made crêpe once a week, and that the quantity I saw was, consequently, the whole week's stock.

The cake, when taken from the fire, is in some degree crisp; not sufficiently so to be stiff like a biscuit, but of a consistency half way between that and a pancake, and as thin as a wafer. I had not much admired the crêpe when eating it stale, in the farm-house at Tregastel; for it loses all its crispness when cold, and becomes leathery and damp. And the peasants fold it up, and keep it in large closely packed heaps, which makes it worse. But I went on devouring with much relish the hot crampoosh, fresh from the fire, as the laughing girl, who was making them on her knees before the hearth, handed them up to me, hanging over the stick, with which she turned them, and thought that fresh crêpe and new milk made by no means a despicable meal.

It will be observed, that this is a far

more luxurious food than the galette eaten by the people of the poorer parts of the country, which consists only of sarrasin, flour, and water; and the superiority may serve among other things to mark the wide difference which exists between the two parts of the country.

Soon after quitting this farm-house, we again came in sight of the river; but, instead of descending into its valley, we continued along the top of the ridge which forms it, till we came in sight of the majestic ruins of Tonquedec, occupying the hill at a point where the river makes a turn, so that the valley is commanded both ways.

This castle was built in the thirteenth century, and is a splendid monument of the military architecture of that period. It proved too strong a place to be safely possessed by a subject. The lords of Tonquedec often gave considerable trouble to their sovereigns, the Dukes of Britanny; and, in 1395, Duke John the fourth caused the fortress to be dismantled. After his death, however, its fortifications were again restored; and during the wars of the League, Tonquedec was one of the most important strongholds of the royal party. Throughout the whole of that struggle, which was fatal to so many of the chateaus of this province, the proud towers of Ton-

quedec remained unscathed. But the destruction, which all the violence of that tumultuous time had failed to effect, was caused in the days of expiring feudality by the simple command of a politic churchman ; and in the reign of Louis the thirteenth, Tonquedec shared the fate of the many other feudal strongholds crushed by Richelieu, that great and bad creator of the monarchy of France, and was by him reduced to the state in which it still remains.

The castle consisted of three courts. The first is formed by a mere outwork, intended to defend the principal entrance. The outward gate of this first court is defended by two turrets, and by moat, drawbridge, and portcullis. On the inside of the wall, to the left of the gateway, may still be seen inscribed in ancient gothic letters, on the stone, "E va Doe !"—" O my God !"—the pious device of the lords of Tonquedec.

The second gate, opening from this court into the principal one, is defended by a second drawbridge and portcullis, and by two strong towers, beneath each of which still exists a dungeon totally dark. On passing this gateway, and entering into the principal court of the building, the grand hall was on the left. Its noble windows, deep

in the amazing thickness of the wall, with their stone seats around the recess so formed, remain, and look-out upon a lovely view over the river and its romantic valley. One or two cottages in the bottom, together with a mill, and a weir on the stream immediately beneath the castle, add much to the beauty of the landscape commanded by these delightful windows.

Beyond this court, opposite to the gateway by which it is entered, is situated the keep, separated by a back-court from the principal body of the castle. This enormous tower, like all the others of the building, is round on the outside, and sexagonal within. It was accessible only by an opening in its second story, which was approached by two draw-bridges.

The first led from the tower to the top of a massive isolated square pillar, built mid-way between it and the nearest part of the rampart of the castle. Thence a second bridge communicated with the rampart. The precautions thus taken to cut off all approach to this last place of refuge for the garrison in time of need, were not likely to have been frustrated in the days before cannon were common, by aught save a want of provisions within this tower of strength. For the ma-

sonry remains to the present day a perfect model of compactness and solidity.

A well cut in the thickness of the wall serves as a staircase, in which the stairs are still sufficiently perfect to make it easy to mount to the top of the tower, the whole of which remains entire. The smaller turret, however, which probably rose from the middle of it, and added something to the height, has perished. One of the remaining towers of the castle is still surmounted with such a turret; and, as that was a very usual mode of building at the period, there can be no doubt that the others were similarly garnished.

The view from the walls of this tower is of urse more extensive than that from the windows of the "grande salle," including the course of the river for a considerable distance either way; but it is not so beautiful as the smaller picture below.

In every respect, these ruins of Tonquedec are well worth coming some distance to visit. To the antiquary they are precious as a specimen of the finest military architecture of the thirteenth century; and to the historian, interesting as illustrative of a state of society peculiar to modern Europe, and of a power, whose might, in the day of its high and palmy

state, and whose decadence and final transference to other hands, these walls equally declare. To the sketcher, they must be peculiarly an object of admiration. For, whether taken alone, or as a leading feature in the surrounding scenery, they combine, to a singular degree, the requisites necessary to form a lovely landscape.

It was not till after spending some hours first in examining every part of the building, and then in admiring it from sundry different points of view, and endeavouring to decide from which of them the various objects of the scenery would form the most advantageous composition, that we made up our minds to take our last look, and turn our backs on Tonquedec, probably for ever.

We returned to Lannion by a shorter but much less interesting route than that by which we had walked in the morning, keeping the eastern side of the river, and falling into the high-road from Guimgamp to Lannion, at a little village called Buhulien.

The next morning we left Lannion, and walked to Morlaix, crossing the boundary of the departments of the Côtes du Nord and Finistere. The distance is about twenty-four miles, and, with the exception of the "Grève de St. Michel," a spot both remarkable in

itself, and especially celebrated in legendary lore, is not particularly interesting.

We breakfasted at the little village of St. Michel, which barely supplied us with the means of doing so. It is a miserable little knot of cottages, which will ere long be swallowed up by the advancing ocean. Two thirds of the commune have already been added to the vast plain of level sand which, stretching for some three miles or more along the coast, is left dry by every receding tide. Tradition tells us that this coast was once covered with forest; and it is said that, when the sands have been much disturbed by a violent tempest, the remains of trees, in such a state of preservation as to be distinguishable by their barks, have been discovered.

The road from Lannion to Morlaix formerly passed over these sands, and accidents used to happen to travellers not unfrequently. A good and safe causeway, however, has just been completed, which runs along the edge of the land, and may be securely travelled on at all times. How long this may continue to be the case seems very doubtful, seeing that M. le Prefet's road, excellent as it now is, will hardly suffice to stay the further encroachment of the waves.

When travellers were in the habit of pass-

ing the sands of St. Michel, a huge granite cross, which stood in the midst of them, was known as the signal that the passage might yet be made. As long as any part of it could be seen above the advancing waves, there was yet time for flight. But woe to the unwary passenger who had neglected to observe the gradual disappearance of this signal of safety! If once the waves had passed over its top, all hope was gone, and, strive as they might, neither horse nor man had any chance of outstripping the pursuit of the rapidly advancing tide.

It was on this beach, then bordered by a thick forest, that according to some traditions Arthur fought the dragon, from whose destruction he received the name of Uter Pendragon. But the old monk of Morlaix, Albert le Grand, who, with a genuine labour of love, has so faithfully gathered the legends of the country into his "Vies des Saints de la Bretagne Armorique," tells the tale in a manner more redounding to the honour of his hero, St. Efflam. According to him, Arthur and the dragon had a bout which lasted the livelong day; at the end of which both parties were exhausted, but neither vanquished. The dragon therefore retired to his den, and the monarch to his tent, both of them with the

full determination of renewing the fight on the following morning. St. Efflam, however, an Irish prince, and a cousin of Arthur's, who had come to this spot to live as a hermit, requested Arthur, when the hero begged his prayers for the successful issue of the morrow's combat, that he would let him first try his method with the dragon.

Accordingly, he passed the night in prayer, and in the morning went to the mouth of the monster's den, and, there kneeling down, prayed that the country might be delivered from the ravages of this scourge. No sooner had the saint finished his prayer, than the dragon came out of his hole, and forthwith, says Albert le Grand, "monta sur un haut rocher, et delà, roulant les yeux de tous costez, fit un sifflement si horrible et effroyable, que tout le rivage en retentit, baissant la teste, et vomit grande abondance de sang; puis, descendant dans la grève, s'alla précipiter dans la mer, où il mourut suffoqué des eaux."

Another story of a saint, who destroyed a dragon not far from this spot, has drawn from M. de Freminville a short essay on the existence of the dragons, of which we meet such constant mention in the legends and histories of the middle ages. He will not believe these

monsters to be the mere creations of romance, and adduces several ingenious reasons for believing them to have been real crocodiles. He cites many known facts of natural history, to prove that there is no reason to believe that these creatures never inhabited western Europe, merely because we do not now find them there. And, above all, he adduces the fact that, in the sands at the mouth of the Seine, and at Harfleur and Quillebœuf, entire skeletons of crocodiles have been found in a state only half fossilized. From all which he concludes, that the continual battles of the heroes of the middle ages with dragons were, in truth, real encounters with crocodiles.

A little beyond the sands of St. Michel, the road, quitting the sea-coast, which bends northward, crosses the frontier of the two departments, and soon reaches Lanmeur, in Finistere.

On the site of this village, once existed, according to the local traditions, a flourishing town called Kerfeunteun, or the place of the fountain. And the fountain from which it took its name is still to be seen in a very curious crypt under the church. This is one of many instances in this province of early Christian churches built over the sacred fountains, which the people worshipped under the

Druids, evidently with the view, as in the case of the Christianized menhirs, of stealing for the true faith, the worship which the people would persist in offering in that spot.

The crypt in which this fountain is enclosed is an extremely curious edifice, evidently dating from a very remote antiquity. Local tradition has constantly asserted that it was built by Pagans, previously to the introduction of Christianity. M. de Freminville says that he thinks this very possible; but he omits to notice a very singular circumstance, which seems to give weight to that opinion. Round each of the thick, short, massive pillars, which support the vaults of this subterranean edifice, there are, carved in high relief, the folds and head of a serpent, and the pillars are totally devoid of all other ornament. Could this have been a Roman temple, dedicated to the worship of Æsculapius? The fountain is still regarded by the people with the utmost reverence, and many miracles are recorded as having been wrought by the virtues of its waters.

It was late before we reached Morlaix, where we found very comfortable quarters at the Hotel de Paris.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Morlaix — The "Léonais" — Character of the "Léonard" — His Costume—His Religion—Cholera in the "Léonais" — Anecdote —Situation of Morlaix—Its Appearance — Anecdotes of the History of Morlaix—Commerce in the Fourteenth Century — Pestilence at Morlaix in the Seventeenth Century — Prices of Provisions at that Period—New Steamer to Morlaix.

Morlaix is the capital of one of the arrondissements of Finistere, and is, next to Brest, its most important town, though neither of them is the capital of the department. In old times, St. Pol de Leon was the seat of a bishop, and the principal town of a district called from it the Léonais, a name still used by the Bretons to designate all the country comprised in the modern arrondissements of Morlaix and Brest—the northern half, in fact, of Finistere.

This district differs essentially in its characteristics, both from the pays de Treguier, which we had just quitted, and from the southern parts of Britanny. The soil itself is

marked by a richness of verdure, and a degree of softness in its aspect, not observable in any other part of the country. Nearly the whole of it is cultivated, and the surfaçe presents a continual succession of undulations, cultivated hills, and luxuriantly green irrigated valleys.

The character of the inhabitants is, perhaps, yet more strongly marked; and is distinguished from that of their neighbours by many remarkable peculiarities. It can hardly be supposed that the Léonard, as the inhabitant of the Léonais is termed, and the Kernewote, or man of Cornouaille—the southern part of Finistere — are sprung from the same race. Both in person and in character they are contrasted. Both, it is true, speak the Breton language, but in so different a dialect, that the inhabitant of one of these ancient bishoprics can hardly understand that of the other.

The Léonard is in person taller and handsomer than the men of any other part of Britanny; and the women may be included in the same remark. He is heavy and slow in his movements, grave and almost melancholy in his manner, quiet and peaceable in his temper, and deeply religious in every sentiment and feeling. That "nuance philoso-



Drawn and Etched by A. Hervieu.

phique," as M. Souvestre calls it, which has begun to weaken the religious faith, and sap the principles of the people in the district of Treguier, has not as yet in the slightest degree affected the Léonais. The whole being and existence of the Léonard is pervaded by his religion. It imparts its colouring to every epoch of his life from the cradle to the grave, and the country itself bears deeply graven the impress of the same character.

The dress of the Léonard is peculiar to the district, and appears calculated to enhance the effect of that gravity of face and staid deportment which characterize him. His square cut coat, long waistcoat, and large loose breeches, are almost invariably of black cloth or serge. His stockings are of the same hue; and the only exceptions to this colour which his figure presents are a small rim of shirt appearing above the collar of his waistcoat, and a scarf of blue linen worn round the body as a belt. The sombre figure is completed by an immensely large black hat, long hair falling over the shoulders, and shoes with enormous buckles.

The figures in the adjoining plate were drawn in the market-place at Morlaix. The figure in black is that of a farmer well to do in the world. The other is a labourer,

whose nether garments of homespun linen are adopted as a cheap substitute for woollen cloth. He wears also a straw hat, surmounted by an ornament of black cotton. But the black hat is by far the more common costume.

The grotesque figure on the corner of the house may be seen among a number of similar wooden carvings, with which the town abounds, in the position represented in the plate, at Morlaix.

Few men pass through life with so little of what are generally considered its recreations and enjoyments as the Léonard. His whole life is divided between the cares necessary to provide for the bodily sustenance of himself and his family, and the multifarious duties of his religion. These form part of every important action of his life, and stand in the place of all relaxation or amusement. The field cannot give its produce till it has been rendered fertile by the processions which take place during the Rogation weeks. For, in the poetic words of one of the peasants, the sterile soil becomes fruitful beneath the stole of the priest. No meal is partaken of without previous prayer, and no day commenced or concluded without it. On Sundays, and on the great festivals of the church,

no distance, no infirmity, no occupation, is permitted to serve as an excuse for not attending on the sacred offices at the parish church. I have seen bedridden persons brought, wrapped in their bed-clothes, to the church-doors in wheelbarrows, and remaining in a position where it was perfectly impossible to hear or even see the performance of the mass, during the whole service.

But it is in the hour of sickness and of death, when all men most feel the necessity of it, that the undoubting stern faith and sombre religion of the Léonard are seen in the most striking manner. It is rarely that he thinks of appealing to human aid in illness. A few years ago, according to M. Souvestre, the peasants never had any recourse to medical men at all; and, at the present day, confidence in their utility is very far from being general.

The more ordinary and more favourite resources are vows to some popular saint, prayers, and masses said at the parish church, together with, perhaps, some traditionary remedies, whose efficacy is often supposed to depend more on times and places, and the observance of various ceremonies, than on any inherent quality in the medicine itself.

But, in a still more striking degree, these

characteristics of the Léonard were exemplified at the period of that tremendous visitation, the cholera. "Qui a vu," says M. Souvestre, "au milieu de l'immense désastre qui l'accabla, ce peuple étrange, encore si fortement marqué du sceau du moyen âge, comprendra facilement ces pestes du xiv[e] siècle, qui, dans les mystérieuses légendes des chroniqueurs, semblaient moins des récits historiques, que de terribles conceptions de poètes, tracées à la manière du Dante."

Unlike the Parisians, who, unchastised by the affliction, in their rage accused the government of having poisoned the public fountains, the poor Breton peasant, accustomed to look for all good or evil to two powers only—the Deity and the demon—sought no farther for the source of the affliction which overwhelmed him. "God has touched us with his finger!" said they; "God has delivered us over to Satan!" Superstition ran wild; and the most monstrous tales of supernatural and terrific appearances were current through the country, and increased the universal terror and consternation.

Remedies were unthought of. A priest, of whom M. Souvestre asked what precautions had been taken in his parish, answered by pointing in silence to twelve graves ready

dug. The churches were opened at unusual hours, public prayers were offered up to appease the wrath of heaven; and the peasants then submitted themselves, without an attempt to moderate its violence, to the awful scourge, which, in some parts of the country, absolutely decimated the population.

The resignation and unmurmuring humility with which the peasants submitted themselves to the chastisement of heaven, formed an extraordinary contrast to the effect of the epidemic upon the less religious population of the towns. One circumstance only caused a murmur of anger and discontent to be heard from this patient people during the trying period of their affliction. It was the sanitary precaution, taken by the authorities, of ordering the victims to the disease to be buried in the cemeteries belonging to isolated chapels distant from any habitation. In many places, the removal of the corpses from the parish churchyard was resisted by force. "The souls of our fathers," said they (I translate the passage from M. Souvestre), have here their resting-places. Why would you separate from them him who has now died? Exiled away, there, in the cemetery of the chapel, he will not hear the chant of the mass, or the prayers that soothe the dead. Here

is his place. Here we can see his grave from our windows, and send our infants nightly to pray upon his tomb. This land is the property of the dead; no power can take it from them, or exchange it for another place."

It was in vain that the dangers of contagion were explained to them. "The dead do not kill the living," they said. "Death can only come by the will of God!"

It was with great difficulty, not without much danger of disturbances, and only by the mediation of the priests, that this precautionary measure, so necessary in parishes where the churchyard is in the centre of the village, and surrounded with houses, was at length carried into effect.

Some idea may be formed, from these anecdotes, of the peculiar character and temperament of the Léonard; and it will easily be conceived that when, with our imaginations vividly excited by such details, we walked out into the market at Morlaix, and found ourselves surrounded by the sombre, antique-looking figures which I have attempted to describe, the scene had enough of singularity and interest to leave a deep impression on the memory.

The appearance of the town itself, too, is in good keeping with that of the people, and

eminently calculated to serve as frame to a "tableau vivant," which has all the appearance of being a scene from the life of the middle ages. Morlaix is situated in a very narrow and deep valley on the river Dossen, at about four leagues from the sea. The steepness of the hills, and the position of the houses, as well as in some degree the general appearance of the town, may be conceived from the expression which I heard more than once in different parts of Britanny—"Out of the garret into the garden, as they say at Morlaix." At the bottom of this narrow ravine a long quay, running along either side of the Dossen, forms the principal street of the town. At the top of this street, at the end that is farthest from the sea, the river is arched over, and the open space thus formed is that on which the market is held. Beyond this two other streams, the Tremorgan and the Nelec, fall into the Dossen, each running in its own narrow valley; so that the town from this spot branches off, as it were, into three different ravines, spreading itself a little up the sides of each. A native historian of the town describes its form as that of a spider, throwing out its long disproportioned limbs from a small thick body, the latter being represented by the closely packed centre of the

town, at the point where the valleys meet, and the former by the streets which run up them ; a simile which may perhaps assist the reader to form an idea of the general appearance of the place.

The houses on the quay are very high, and are mostly built " en colombage," a construction which adds much to the characteristic air of antiquity that pervades the place. Conceive, in addition to this picturesque line of ancient houses, with their gardens mounting to the tops of the hills above them, the masts and rigging of two or three merchant vessels on the river, and the red sails of a variety of small craft belonging to the place, and people the scene with a grave silent crowd of the farmers and peasants of the Léonais, and you will have a tolerably accurate idea of the places and people that surrounded us when we sallied forth on the morning after our arrival from the Hotel de Paris.

Morlaix was one of the earliest towns in Britanny which became commercial, and, through the whole of the middle ages, we find its merchants wealthy and powerful, despite disadvantages of various kinds against which they had to contend. In fact, the commerce of that period must, when successful, have

been excessively lucrative to have at all surmounted the continual losses which it had to sustain.

The commercial successes of the Morlaisians drew down upon them the especial enmity of the English; and, in all the wars between the two countries, Morlaix was marked as an object of attack. One occasion, in particular, upon which the English were successful in an attempt to surprise the town, is still remembered at Morlaix with feelings of bitterness and anger. It was on the night of the fourth of July, in the year 1522, that a fleet of sixty English vessels, having gained information that Morlaix was unguarded from a traitor—a certain captain, belonging to the town, named Latricle—entered the river Dossen. It so happened that the nobles and gentlemen were all gone to a "monstre," or general review at Guimgamp, and a great part of the townsmen absent at the fair of Pontivy. A few of the strangers introduced themselves, in disguise, into the city at twilight, and, in the middle of the night, while the citizens slept in security, opened the gates to the whole body of the enemy.

A scene of the most dreadful carnage and destruction ensued. The inhabitants, in the

absence of their most able men, and rendered still more powerless by the extremity of their consternation, offered scarcely any resistance. Local tradition, however, has preserved the recollection of a certain housemaid, in the Grand'rue, who caused the death of several English, by so arranging the cover of a large reservoir of water, that it gave way as they passed over it, and precipitated them into the abyss. The same legend tells also of a curé of one of the churches of the town, who did great execution upon the "brigands," as the Morlaisians term them, by picking them off with a musket from the top of the tower of his church.

The town was sacked, burned, and utterly devastated; and it was not till after a day and night of pillage, and rioting, and excess of every sort, that the enemy thought of retiring to their ships, which they had been obliged to leave at some little distance from the town, as they had found the course of the river barred with trees. Scarcely had they quitted the place, when the gentlemen of Morlaix, who had heard a rumour of these events, arrived from Guimgamp, and, with the inhabitants of the town, now somewhat re-assured by their presence, commenced an eager pursuit. But they were too late to

prevent the principal body of the English from regaining their ships, and getting safe off with their booty and prisoners, among whom were many of the principal merchants of Morlaix. Six hundred laggards only, who lost themselves in a wood between the town and their ships, probably from drunkenness, were slaughtered by the enraged Morlaisians at a spot marked by a fountain, which then ran red with their blood, and which has ever since borne the name of "Feunteun ar Saozon," or Fountain of the Saxons, as the Bretons, like their cousins, the Welch, always call the English.

This deed of vengeance, however, could not repair the damage which had been done. The principal part of the town was utterly ruined; the richest inhabitants were prisoners; its commerce was almost annihilated; and ten long years of desolation and misery were the result of that one fatal night of disaster. After a time, the conclusion of peace with England restored some degree of confidence; the inhabitants returned to the almost deserted town, and new houses rose from among the ruins.

It is mentioned in the archives of the place that the English sacked Morlaix a second time, about or before 1541; but history has

not preserved any of the details of this second misfortune. The inhabitants, however, seem to have been more upon their guard after the severe lesson they received in 1522. For the townsmen formed themselves into a militia of their own, and adopted, for a device, the words "S'ils te mordent, *mordes-les;*" which punning motto they inscribed, together with the portraiture of two grotesque heads, meant to represent England and Ireland, underneath the city-arms of their banner.

In 1561, Charles IX. gave the burghers of Morlaix a charter of incorporation, and their mayor enjoyed, in common with the mayors of the great towns of Nantes, Brest, and St. Malo, the highly-prized privilege of sitting in the assembly of the states of Britanny with a sword by his side. The commerce of the city must have about this time again become considerable; for an old historian of the wars of the League in Britanny, in summing up all the evils which afflicted the country at the period when they broke out, says that the nobles were effeminate, impious, and drunken; the clergy simoniacal and avaricious; and, as to the bourgeois, the peace had so enriched them that they got above their condition, and became proud and arrogant, and "ne respiraient que de révolte

contre les nobles. Beaucoup d'entre eux étaient mieux logés que des gens de qualité, avaient de beaux ménages et de superbes hanaps d'argent doré."

Notwithstanding this excess of wealth in the hands of the richer merchants, Morlaix was, in old times, noted for a degree of poverty, misery, and filth, remarkable even in those days, and in that country. In the seventeenth century, it was exceedingly closely inhabited, and the position of the town increased the tendency of this to produce disease. It accordingly suffered more from this source of misery than any other town. It was visited, in 1623, and 1626, and again in 1640, by pestilence; and each time a fearful number of the population perished.

During the early part of that century, the price of a repast at an inn was fixed at Morlaix, under pain of a fine to the aubergiste who should demand more, at the sum of twelve sous. A horse's bait cost five sous; Bourdeux wine was six sous a pint; that of Anjou or Poitou five.* And, in the intervals of its disasters of plague and war, the town was celebrated for its good cheer and revelry.

At the present day, Morlaix has little, except its general air of picturesque antiquity, its narrow streets, with their old wooden-fronted

houses, richly ornamented with a crowd of grotesque figures, of kings, priests, saints, monsters, and bagpipers, its remarkable situation, and the beautiful walks in its environs, to engage the attention of a traveller. But I think that a greater degree of prosperity is in store for Morlaix than she has ever seen yet. A steam-boat has recently commenced plying between that town and Havre, which will confer important advantages on all the western part of Britanny, and especially on the port from which she runs. If the natural resources of the country are called forth, and all the riches drawn from the soil, which the bounty of Nature intended them to furnish to the hand of industry, Britanny must become a rich instead of a poor country; and Morlaix would, in all probability, be the principal port from which the surplus produce of the richest part of the country would be exported, and the mart of those luxuries and comforts for which increasing wealth would rapidly cause a demand.

This boat did not commence running till we had left Morlaix, which I regretted not a little, as I should have much liked to see the first arrival of this wondrous machine on the shores of this unsophisticated people. The Bretons have seen plenty of steamers, of

course, but, to the peasant population of the country around Morlaix, it must have been a source of wonderment and speculation, which I should like much to have witnessed.

The delightful walks in the neighbourhood, and the abundant exercise for the pencil to be found in the town itself, detained us more than one day. And we left it, promising ourselves the pleasure of visiting it once again on our return from an excursion into the interior of Finistere, which, like the inland portion of the Côtes du Nord, is entirely mountainous, and, in all respects, a much less favoured district than the neighbourhood of the coast.

We intended to be absent on this expedition for some days, and we set off, prepared by all we had heard, to find greater poverty, less civilization, and rougher accommodation, than we had yet met with.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Excursion into the Hills—Road to Carhaix—Anecdote of the Monks of Relecq—Sequiriou—Dwellings of the Peasants—Walk to Huelgoat—Accommodations there—Paying for Peeping—Walk to St. Derbot—Cascade—Country above it—A Great Grandmother—Party at Dinner —Latin Scholars—Cross Questions and Crooked Answers.

The first object of our excursion into the interior was to visit the rich lead mines of Huelgoat and Poullaouen. They are situated in the midst of the Ayrès hills, and those of Huelgoat, which are the most considerable, are about eight leagues from Morlaix.

We sallied forth from our inn in light marching order, leaving every thing behind us, except what was absolutely necessary for a week's absence; and we heard the clocks of the town chiming five, as we mounted the steep hill, which the high-road to Carhaix ascends, as it quits the valley of the river. From the top of this hill we looked back on a fine view of Morlaix and its narrow valley, and the green cultivated country around it.

We very soon, however, left every thing like cultivated ground behind us, as we approached the chain of the Ménez-Arés; and the church bells which were already ringing out for early mass — (for it was some fête day)—soon died away, as we entered the wide and silent moors, which lie to the south of the town.

We had walked about a couple of leagues without seeing a human being since leaving the immediate environs of the town, when we overtook a young peasant, who bid us good morning in French. So as we walked on the road together, he mending his pace a little, and we slackening our's, a thought for sociability sake, we had a little chat. He was going to " Le Cloitre," he told us, a little village to the right of the road at no great distance, and would give us some breakfast if we would go so far out of our way with him. We declined this on the plea of not having time, but, as far as our roads lay together, we went on in company very amicably. I asked him if the ruins of the Abbey of Relecq were not near Le Cloitre. He said they were, but that there was very little to see, for that the buildings were almost totally destroyed; and no more than they deserved either, he added.

I was a good deal surprised to hear a Bas-

Breton peasant speak in that way of the destruction of a convent. But he went on to say that the monks were very bad men, and that his father had told him that he had frequently seen young girls of the parish hoisted over the convent walls at night; which was a sacrilege, he said, and quite a sufficient reason to draw down upon the country the judgment of the revolution.

After parting with our acquaintance at the spot where the road to Le Cloitre turned off, we walked many miles without seeing a single soul. As we plunged deeper into the recesses of the Menéz-Arés hills, the aspect of the country became more and more wild and savage. A vast extent of unbroken moorland covered with broom and furze stretched on all sides as far as the eye could see; and from the higher ridges which we gradually attained, expecting to see some end to this dreary solitude, a wider prospect of the same kind was spread beneath us.

About four leagues from Morlaix, we passed a wretched little hamlet called Sequiriou, consisting of two or three miserable hovels crouching in the bottom of a steep ravine, by the side of a slow lazy-looking stream, which gave an air of insalubrity and additional misery to the spot. How the handful of pea-

sants who inhabit it can contrive to find the means of existence amid these inhospitable wilds, it is difficult to conceive.

Near this spot we crossed the boundary line of the arrondissement of Morlaix, and entered that of Chatcaulin. According, therefore, to the old divisions of the province, we were now no longer in the Léonais, but in Cornouaille. The scenery around us was a characteristic specimen of this, the wildest, rudest, and most savage part of Britanny. And the miserable hovels of Sequiriou shewed us that the accounts we had heard of the state of the people in this, the poorest part of the country were scarcely exaggerated.

The description of a Breton cottage and its inhabitants, which Cambry gives in his "Voyage dans le Finistere," which furnishes a picture of the country in 1794, may still serve as an accurate account of many of the dwellings of the poorer peasants, and of their habits. "Ces maisons sont toujours sans air, etroites et privées de lumière. Je n'ai pas parlé du parquet; jamais il n'est carrelé, ni boisé, ni pavé. La terre inégale en sert; on pourrait se casser la jambe dans les trous profonds qui s'y forment. Les enfans s'y blessent, et s'estropient fort souvent. Ces hommes sont incorrigibles. Imaginez la malpropreté,

l'odeur, l'humidité, la boue, qui règnent dans ces demeures souterraines, l'eau de fumier, qui souvent en défend l'entrée, qui presque toujours y pénètre. Ajoutez-y la malpropreté, la gale originelle, héréditaire, et des pères, et des enfans; — la malpropreté d'individus, qui ne se baignent, qui ne se lavent jamais, qui sortent des fossés, des marres, des cloaques, ou l'ivresse les avait précipités. Peignez vous ces cheveux plats et longs, cette barbe épaisse, ces figures chargées de raies crasseuses, les courts gilets, les culottes énormes, les petits boutons, les guêtres, les sabots, qui forment leur habillement, et vous aurez l'idée d'un paysan breton."

Cambry has recently been edited twice by two editors, each well acquainted apparently with the country he describes. The first, M. Freminville, says, in a note on the above passage, "Ce tableau très-bien tracé d'un chaumière bretonne, et de ses habitans, est d'une admirable vérité. Le temps n'y a rien changé encore." M. Souvestre, however, Cambry's second editor—(the two editions were, as nearly as possible, simultaneous) — remarks upon the same passage, "L'exaggération est manifeste dans cette description d'un ménage breton." I confess that I am inclined to think, with M. de Freminville, that the portrait con-

tinues to be a very true one, supposing always that it is understood to apply only to the hill districts of Cornouaille, and not, for the most part, to the Léonais. M. Souvestre says that "La gale" has almost entirely disappeared in the two arrondissements of Morlaix and Brest. This may be true; but it still exists to a frightful extent in Cornouaille.

After about another hour's walking, we left the high-road to Carhaix to our right, and, taking the track which leads to Le Huelgoat, we soon came to the village of Berrien, which, with its well-built stone church, in the midst of its fir-planted churchyard, presents a welcome oasis, in this wide desert of "landes." The peasants there had just caught an immense otter, or "chien d' eau," as they called it, in the stream, which runs below their village — one of the sources of the Avon— that prettiest of all names for a river, which the French destroy by turning it into "Aulne."

Beyond this, as we approached Le Huelgoat, the country assumed a yet wilder appearance. The hill-sides were strewn with immense masses of rock, and every thing seemed to betoken one of those convulsions of nature, traces of which are so often observed in the neighbourhood of her hidden mineral treasures.

We reached the little town about ten; and were fortunate enough to secure the only beds at the one inn, kept by the "Veuve Madec," a jovial buxom landlady, whom the occasional arrival of strangers at her inn to see the mines had rendered somewhat more civilized than her neighbours. Though my bed-room was lighted and aired almost as much by the enormous chimney as by the one small window, still between the two it was aired, and was not odorous. And, though the spiral stair, by which the inmate might climb to it, was as break-neck a combination of solid logs as could, by any ingenuity, have been contrived, and the door of the room was an admirable illustration of the vis inertiæ, manifesting the strongest inclination, whether open or shut, to remain as it was, still it was something to find an upstairs room, and one with a door to it at all. And though the floor of the chamber had evidently been constructed by some carpenter who had never been out of his own hilly country, and had, therefore, never acquired the idea of a level surface, and was an inch thick in dirt; and though the green drugget covering of the bed did not look very tempting, yet it must be confessed that the sheets, though as coarse as the mainsail of a man of war, were

clean. Indeed, throughout this most dirty country, I never found reason to complain in this respect; nor was I ever told, as I have been in Germany, that clean sheets were an extra, and, if desired, must be paid for as such.

As soon as we had first, like provident travellers, secured our quarters for the night, we turned our attention to breakfast, and were considerably exhilarated, after our twenty-four miles' walk, by the widow "Madec's" promise of "biftec" and trout, of which last there is abundance in the river. Being a trifle tired, and, perhaps, somewhat over-anxious for the speedy appearance of the creature comforts we had been promised, we sat down in the kitchen, and watched their preparation with considerable interest. Now this is what I would especially warn all travellers in Britanny against doing. It is a prying curiosity, which is as sure to do violence to a man's stomach as that of eaves-droppers to their vanity. A man has no business with his food till it is set before him. If he can then swallow it without disgust, let him bolt it, and be thankful. It is always desirable to keep the mind free from prejudices. But, above all, those prejudices are especially inconvenient which lead a man to quarrel with his ten o'clock bread and butter, when

he has been afoot since five. I will not tell all that I saw in the widow Madec's kitchen. Suffice it, that when the "biftecs" and trout were pronounced ready, I had ceased to be so; and felt very little inclination to meddle with them.

After this miserable and abortive attempt at breakfast, we set off to walk to the cascade of St. Derbot, a bit of scenery of which we had heard much at Morlaix, intending to reserve the mine for an entire day, when we could encounter the labour of the descent fresh and unfatigued. The walk to St. Derbot is a very pretty one, first over a high down, from which there is an immense view over a wide extent of country, chiefly moorland and forest, with the spires of one or two villages few and far between, and the tower of Carhaix high on its bleak hill in the extreme distance. We then descended into a romantic little dale, deeply shut in by its steep sides, and secluded in the midst of these wild heights, like the happy valley of Rasselas. We followed this, till suddenly the grey church of St. Derbot came in sight, snugly niched into a recess in the oak wood, which covers the hill above it. Two other still smaller valleys here open into the same spot, and the distant murmur of a waterfall left us

in no doubt which of them we ought to follow to arrive at the object of our visit.

The sides of this valley rapidly drew in upon us as we advanced, and the noise of the water became clearer and louder, and the whole space between the hills was occupied by thick wood, through which the river found its way in several divided streamlets. We followed one of these, now jumping from stone to stone in the midst of its rocky bed, and now making our way among the copse on its banks, as wood or water seemed to offer the lesser impediment. The rivulet soon became a rapid, splashing, and dashing, and flashing, as Southey says of Lowdore, among the rocks which impeded it; and a little higher up we found the different streams united, and, after advancing another hundred yards, stood at the bottom of the cataract.

At first we were disappointed, for, though the scene was wild, picturesque, and romantic, as a waterfall the cascade was nothing. But, as we proceeded, matters improved, and eventually we admitted that the waterfall of St. Derbot fully deserved all we had heard said of it. There is, however, no one perpendicular fall of any magnitude. But the constant succession of small falls, torrents, and whirpools, in great number and

endless variety of size and form, which the river makes as it finds its way to the bottom from a very considerable height, through a gorge filled with huge rocks, was to me ample compensation for the want of any one magnificent sheet of falling water. We observed one spot, where the slender thread of a streamlet, falling about two feet, had hollowed a well in the rock in an almost perfectly circular form, four feet deep, and eighteen inches in diameter.

The scenery is much indebted to the thick woods which overhang the gorge, and which consist chiefly of oak. About half way up, the dead arm of an ancient giant of the forest stretched pale and rugged over the torrent in so Salvatoresque a manner, denouncing, as one might fancy, a curse on the intruders into these solitary shades, that my companion insisted on making a study of it. So he established himself on a rock in the midst of the torrent, while I rambled about among the different falls, and amused myself by hurling from their ancient seats into the abyss the largest masses that my strength would suffice to move.

When the sketch was finished, we again proceeded upward, climbing and leaping from rock to rock with increasing difficulty, as the

masses became larger and larger, till, towards the top of the gorge, they were quite stupendous. On the very summit, amid a sea of rocks, perched on the utmost edge of a brow which overhangs the torrent, and bedewed with its continual spray, we found a most picturesque little water-mill. Deeply overshadowed by the thick forest above it, entirely overgrown with luxuriant ivy, and much smaller, all comprised, than many of the masses among which it is placed, it would have made an admirable subject for the pencil of Ruisdael. Here, again, the sketch-book was produced, and I was left to my own resources to amuse myself for an hour.

When this had elapsed, it was too late to pursue our ramble any further; although the course of the river, as far as we could see it, rather tempted us to do so. The woods ceased, but the rocks continued to accompany the stream as it came across a most desolate-looking moor. Beauty there certainly was none beyond the point we had already reached; but the exceeding savageness and rugged barrenness of the scenery made me long to penetrate farther into the recesses of the hills, from which this melancholy-looking river issued; and to see what still more utter desolation there could be at the solitary

source of a stream, which had brought with it, so near to the haunts of men, such dismal dreariness.

But as we should, in all probability, have spent the night among the hills, which would have involved supping rather fuller of horrors than I had any desire to do, we abandoned this project, and turned our backs on St. Derbot, finding our way back over the heights to Huelgoat by a route somewhat different to that by which we had walked in the morning.

On our return to our inn, we found the widow Madec, assisted by her grandmother, a fine, active old woman, nearly a hundred years old, who can read without spectacles, and has sixty descendants living, preparing supper for four or five of the employés at the mine. So we ordered our dinner to be added to their repast, but scrupulously avoided prying into the mysteries of its preparation.

Our party at dinner consisted of a German employed as chemist at the mine, an old man who looked like a peasant, but who was, in fact, an independent gentleman, living and getting drunk daily, as I was told, on his property, which consisted of a few shares in the mine, and two other men, overlookers of the works.

We were a good deal amused by our com-

pany at dinner, and afterwards we all agreed to have some mulled claret together, for the concoction of which they said that our jolly landlady was particularly famous. The jug came, and was voted excellent; and soon it began to do its work in promoting the talkativeness of the party. To my great surprise, they got into a violent dispute about which understood most Latin. They all seemed to have a fair smattering of it, except the proprietor, who clearly knew only a few words, but tried hard to conceal his ignorance. He was the butt of the whole party; and, what with the hot wine and the dispute, was rapidly becoming fuddled. The German, who was the best scholar of the set, challenged him to answer him in Latin, and began: "Du es unus eprius borcus;" to which the old fool replied, without the smallest hesitation, and with much drunken gravity: "In sæcula sæculorum." This produced a roar of laughter from all present, though I doubt whether the other two understood much more of the German's latin than the proprietor, who was "de la fabrique de l' eglise," which means, that he held an office somewhat analagous to that of our churchwardens; and all his latin consisted of the scraps he had picked up from frequently hearing the church service.

The success of his first sally tempted the chemist to try again; and he went on with: "Et bost mortem duam, du ipis at tiapolum." But this time, chance gave the old sot the advantage, for he chanted out, in the true Gregorian cadence, and with a drunken leer, which looked as sly as if he knew the meaning of what had been said to him: "Et cum spiritu tuo." I was exceedingly amused at this unintended repartee, and laughed so heartily, that I almost made the good German angry.

A few compliments on his scholarship, however, and a little talk about Germany, soon made us great friends, and he invited me to come and see him at his house, at the mine, where he said he would shew me the process of separating the silver from the ore that contains it, which it was his especial business to conduct. We accepted this invitation with many thanks, and agreed to be with him by six o'clock the next morning, the hour at which the process commenced every day.

Having completed this arrangement, we left our friends at the beginning of a fresh jug; and, having passed in safety the dangers of the precarious staircase, were shortly fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Visit to the Lead Mine — Walk from Huelgoat — "Le Gouffre" — Fatal Accident — Process of separating the Silver from the Earth which contains it by amalgamation — A German Chemist — His Residence — and Hospitality — Breakfast Party — Process of working the Lead Ore — Wages — Night Miners — Descent into the Mine — Splendid Hydraulic Machine — Operations of Mining — Produce of the Mine — Walk back to Huelgoat.

About five o'clock the next morning we started, in company with one of the overseers, who had supped with us last night. He had a man with him to convey a huge bag of money, which was to be taken to the mine for the payment of the miners. It was quite as much as a man could carry.

The walk from Huelgoat to the mine is a delightful one. We first descended into the valley below the town, where a river runs, of which I could learn no other name than "La Riviére," "L' eau des Mines," or "La riviére de L' Huelgoat."

About half way down the steep side of this valley there is a little canal, about three feet

broad, which runs to the mine, keeping the same level, and following all the inundations and inequalities of the hill-side. This canal has been constructed to convey a supply of water to the mine, at a certain elevation, for the purpose of working the hydraulic machine, which keeps it free from water.

Along the side of this, a well-kept gravel foot-path leads from Huelgoat to the works. The greater part of the distance lies through a thick wood, which every here and there opens sufficiently to afford a lovely peep at the rocky valley below. The neatness with which the little canal is kept in order, and the care bestowed on the walk, together with one or two stone seats in the wood, give an air of garden-like prettiness to the naturally beautiful scenery, which induced me to inquire whether the walk had been made for any other purpose than as a communication with the mine. To which my conductor replied, that when the gentlemen who owned the mine came from Paris, they sometimes brought ladies with them, and had parties and music in these woods, and that the walk had been made for such purposes.

Our guide pointed out a remarkable spot to us, which, upon one of these festive occasions, had been the scene of a frightful acci-

dent. The place where this happened is called Le Gouffre. The river, which, through the whole valley, runs among and over rocks, is near this place entirely overwhelmed and hidden by them. An immense number of enormous masses have been thrown, by some tremendous convulsion, in the wildest confusion, into the bottom of the valley. Heaped upon one another to a very great height, they form a number of tremendous caverns, at whose bottom, far beyond the lowest point to which the eye can penetrate the darkness, the river is heard roaring and foaming in its prison, from which it forces its way out through a variety of tortuous passages, and at a considerable distance from the spot where it disappears.

The abyss thus formed, into which it is possible to look down, from a spot not far from the path through the woods, is a kind of marvel which strangers are taken to see; and it was down this tremendous jaw-hole that an unfortunate lady fell, in consequence of a slip of her foot upon the dry leaves on the brink of the chasm.

When we arrived at the mine, which is somewhat less than an hour's walk from the town, our first care was to seek out the residence of our friend, the chemist. We had no

difficulty in finding this. A large, raw, unfinished-looking stone building was pointed out to us, in the two lower floors of which the operations that it was his duty to superintend were carried on, while the poor chemist himself resided in a garret over them.

We were in good time to see the interesting operation that extracts the silver from the earth which contains it, by a process called amalgamation. This takes place every morning of the year, at six o'clock, except on Easter-Sunday, which the poor German said was the only holyday he had all the year round.

When the red earth, which contains the silver, and lies above the lead ore, for the most part, is raised out of the mine, it is first pounded and washed, by which a large portion of the earth is separated from it. The metalliferous part is then reduced to a sort of paste, in which state it is brought to our friend, the chemist. It is then placed in six large rotatory barrels, together with a certain quantity of mercury, and a mixture of salt and vitriol, which assists the process of amalgamation, and plenty of water. The barrels are then kept revolving by a water power for twenty-four hours, at the end of which

time, the mercury has drawn to itself all the silver away from the earth. The water and earth are then drawn off, and the united mercury and silver remain at the bottom of the barrels. This is then pumped into an hydraulic press, which separates the mercury from the silver, by forcing the united mass, with great power, into a cylinder, one end of which is stopped with a piece of the best and closest grained ash wood, that can be procured. This sort of bung is about ten inches in diameter, and two or three inches thick. The action of the press forces the mercury to pass through the pores of this, while the silver remains in a solid state behind. Some little mercury, however, still remains attached to it, which is afterwards caused to pass off by evaporation, at a very high temperature.

After we had witnessed the whole of this interesting operation, we ascended, with the chemist, to his residence, over the scene of his labours. He was a bachelor, and had only two rooms; of which, the one that we entered was a specimen of most bachelor-like and disorderly confusion. Among a number of German and French books of chemistry, there was a volume of "Schiller's Sämmliche Werke," and Anquetil's History of France. There was a piano strewed with papers, scrib-

bled all over with calculations, and results of his chemical operations. There was his tobacco-pouch on a nail by the fire-place, and a fowling-piece in the corner. In one cupboard, reposed a collection of specimens of the various minerals obtained from the mine; and in another, the furniture of his kitchen, larder, and pantry. From the recesses of this, he produced some black puddings, or some composition of a similar description, which he boasted with much exultation were his own making, a loaf of bread, and a bottle of brandy, of all which good things he pressed us to partake with much hospitality.

As we had not yet tasted food this morning, we were not sorry to accept his offer. The sausage was excellent but I should have liked a little water with my brandy. This, however, the German peremptorily refused. His lodging was a poor one, he said, but it should not be disgraced by any one drinking water in it. So we were fain to wash down our breakfast with a quantum sufficit of brandy neat.

While we were yet feasting off the good chemist's provender, another man entered, who came to invite him and us to breakfast with him. He was an employé of the govern-

ment, who resided at the mine for the purpose of collecting the government dues upon the proceeds. He said he had a friend come to breakfast with him, and hoped we would join them. We made no objection; so we all walked off to his house together; but, before we left the German's garret, our new acquaintance seized the remainder of the sausage, and one of its owner's chemical calculations to wrap it up in, and thrust it into his great-coat pocket, saying, to the poor chemist, "You know you put quicksilver in your sausages. This must go and be analysed — at my breakfast table." And, despite its owner's protestations that it was the last bit he had, and urgent remonstrances, it was carried off; the good man himself supplying a clean sheet of paper to wrap it up in — to save his MS.

The revenue-officer was also a bachelor, and lived in a little cottage by himself, but in better style than the German, in that he kept a servant.

His breakfast was not ready till twelve o'clock, and we spent the interval in lounging about his garden, and playing with his dogs, and smoking cigars. When the breakfast came, it was excellent and plentiful, and might well have spared the stolen sausage,

which duly—or unduly rather—made its appearance, and was quickly demolished by the party, amid much merriment at the poor German's expence, who, hardly knowing whether to cry or laugh, contrived to secure at least one last morsel of his favourite handiwork.

After breakfast, we took leave of our hospitable host, and went to see the process of obtaining the lead from the earth that contains it. This is performed by about a hundred women in an immensely long barn-like building. An equal number of long sloping tables are ranged, side by side, at intervals of about two feet, throughout the whole length of the building. They may be about seven feet long by three broad. A stream of water runs along the tops of these tables, which can be turned on to each, or stopped, at the discretion of the woman who works at it. The matter that comes from the mine is first pounded to dust, and is then brought in small boxes, holding about half a bushel each, carried on poles, like a sedan chair, by two girls, and thrown on the upper end of the table. It is then the business of the women to let the water on in small quantities, and, by means of a sort of rake, and a brush made of broom twigs, thoroughly wash the

mineral matter, till, by degrees, the earthy particles pass off with the water, and the grains of nearly pure lead remain, blue and shining, upon the table.

All the women engaged in this work were young, and apparently perfectly healthy. I was told, however, that every one of them were afflicted with " la gale." They seemed perfectly happy, however, and some were chattering, and many singing, together at their work, if, indeed, the sort of drawling monotonous chant, in which they repeat their ballads, can be so called.

These women receive nine sous only for a day's work, and they work twelve hours. The miners gain from nineteen to twenty-one sous a day, of the same number of hours.

We asked permission of the sous-director to descend into the mine, and were told that, at six o'clock, when the day-gangs come up, and those for the night go down, we could do so. We spent the interval in rambling about the extremely picturesque valley, at the bottom of the hill in whose sides the mine is situated.

At about half-past five, a large bell began to send its summons over the valley, and the night-miners were seen assembling. Sombre grim-looking figures began to emerge from the woods, which clothed the hill-sides, in

every direction. The most matter-of-fact minded admirer of the "positif" could not have helped having his imagination a little excited by the appearance of those strange-looking men.

As the scene became suddenly peopled with their dusky forms, they might well have seemed spirits of the earth, summoned to the surface from guarding Nature's hidden treasure, at the sound of that bell—a grisly crew of those gnomes, who

> "Their empire keep,
> From a few fathoms deep,
> Down, down, down,
> Down to the very center."

With their lean, haggard features, begrimed countenances, and long hair streaming over their shoulders, their uniform costume of dingy wollen jackets and trousers, and their iron lamps suspended at each man's belt, they were certainly the most super—or perhaps subter—natural-looking company I ever saw.

Their appearance warned us that it was time to make our own preparations for our descent. So we repaired to the house of the sous-director, who had kindly promised to lend us dresses, proper for the occasion, to put over our own. We were now equipped,

each in a regular miner's costume, and each with his lamp duly prepared; and M. le Roux, the sous-director, accompanied us from his house to the crowd of miners, who were now assembled in front of a building near the shaft, where they keep their tools, and where, from an immense cistern of oil, kept there for the purpose, each man fills his lamp for the night before he descends.

Here we were delivered over to the care of the master-miner, with directions to shew us every part of the mine, and bring us again safely to the surface.

There are several different shafts to the mine, which is very extensive. Some are used only for extracting ore, and others for the descent and return of the men; and a very salutary precaution is observed of using always new ropes at the latter, which are, after a short service, sent to be worn out where their breaking would be attended with no loss of human life. We entered the hill-side by a horizontal passage, along which the little canal before spoken of runs to do its work. For the hydraulic pump which it works is entirely in the mine, and at a considerable distance below the surface.

This machine, which is the only one of the kind in France, was constructed by Mr.

Juncker, a German, engineer to the mines, and is truly a grand triumph of engineering skill. The principle is the same as that of the machines used in the enormous salt-works of Bavaria and Austria. But there the engineer had to erect his machines on the surface of the soil, in as large a space as he judged desirable. Here the colossal members of an engine, whose utility depends on its perfect accuracy of movement and stedfast immobility, had to be placed and supported in a confined area in the very bowels of the earth, where, instead of having a solid foundation to build on, the engineer was thrown on his own invention to find the means of sustaining the enormous weight of his machine over an abyss which yawns beneath it. Yet so perfectly has this difficulty been mastered, that a degree of steadiness has been imparted to the machinery which is rarely observed in cases where great power is required, even under the most favourable circumstances. In no part of Mr. Juncker's machinery could I perceive the slightest vibration, by placing my hand upon the various portions of it.

A report, made to the Academy of Sciences, respecting this machine, in September, 1835, which was drawn up by M. Arago, concludes with these words: "Tant d'études, tant d'in-

génieuses combinaisons, tant de travaux, tant d'expérience n'ont pas été en pure perte. La machine de Huelgoat a réalisé toutes les prévisions de la science. Depuis trois ans et demi, elle fonctionne nuit et jour, et la regularité, la douceur, le moelleux de ses mouvements, l'absence compléte du bruit, ont été un juste sujet d'admiration pour les ingénieurs des différents pays qui l'ont examinée. Il est vraiment regrettable qu'une machine si belle, si puissante, si habilement exécutée, et qui fait tant d'honneur à notre industrie (it would have been more candid to have said to Mr. Juncker, a German, whose improvement it is upon a German model) soit réleguée à l'une des extrémités de la France, dans un canton rarement visité."

After inspecting every part of this truly gigantic engine, to which we had descended by ladders, we followed our conductor to an opening into a large square shaft.

"Messieurs, votre voiture vous attend," said he, pointing to a huge basket hanging suspended in mid-air, which he had previously directed to wait for us there.

We all three clambered in, and, our guide having given the signal to those above by pulling a wire which ran down one corner of the shaft, we began our descent at a moderate

and equable pace. When we had thus journeyed for a few minutes, lighting up for a moment as we passed the thick darkness which closed in over our heads as we plunged onwards into the impenetrable obscurity beneath us, another pull of the wire arrested our downward course, and we landed in another passage of the vast labyrinth of tunnels of which this immense mine consists.

After walking along this for some ten minutes, sometimes paddling in water up to our ancles, and sometimes knocking our heads against the rock above us, we arrived at a spot where some men were working a vein of the red earth which contains silver. It appeared to be not very hard, and easily worked. Small specimens of native silver, as it is termed, are sometimes found; and before leaving the mine I procured one; but we could not succeed in finding any ourselves.

We returned from these silver workers to the opening in the shaft where we had left our attendant bucket, which we found patiently waiting our arrival. We once more embarked, and again gave the signal to descend; for I wished to see also the working of the lead ore, which, as our German friend had told us, was "blus pas." So we were safely lowered by the good hemp to another

gallery, where we again landed, and, after another journey somewhat longer than the last, came to a party of miners who had just finished punching a small hole, some two feet deep, in the rock, and, having arranged their powder and match, were on the point of setting fire to it. They called to us to stand back, and we placed ourselves behind a projecting angle of the rock, which completely sheltered us from any of the effects of the blast. The explosion was tremendous, and the retreating echoes continued to roll among the distant passages for a longer time than I could have believed. The air, too, was considerably agitated, and it was several minutes before the smoke was entirely cleared away.

We returned after this once more to our bucket, and this time, giving the ascending signal, were speedily raised to the surface, safe and sound in body, but lamentably disfigured in exterior, and, in fact, far more resembling miners than when we had descended.

Every one who has penetrated into a mine must have remarked the extraordinary sensation one feels on emerging once more from such dismal haunts into broad light of a sunny day. It is not only the eye that is affected. The surface of the body. the nose, the lungs, are all sensible of the sudden change, in a manner

which shews how wonderfully soon every part of the animal system can adapt itself to almost any circumstances, not absolutely affecting the vital functions.

By the time we had disrobed ourselves, and washed away the compound of oil, lampblack, and mud, with which our faces and hands were besmeared, it was nearly nine o'clock, and we began to be afraid that La Veuve Madec would give us up, and shut up her house before we could get back to Huelgoat; especially as we had to carry with us the no slight weight of a very tolerable collection of specimens of the various productions of the mine.

The treasures concealed beneath the soil of this valley were known at a very distant period. M. de Freminville says that the mine has been worked for four centuries. But I think that there are reasons for believing that a far earlier date may be assigned to the first piercing of the soil.

The mine of Huelgoat is much richer than that of Poullaouen, and the mining works are far more considerable. I find it stated, in a statistical account of it, that the quantity of mineral annually prepared for the smelting-house is, upon an average, 1,100,000 kilogrammes, which produce of lead 715,000 kilo-

grammes, and of silver 733 kilogrammes. This quantity of silver, it must be understood, is exclusive of that obtained from the red earth in the manner above described. It is only of late years that this earth has been discovered to be of value, and immense quantities of it have been thrown away, some in places from which they are now able to get it again, and submit it to the process of amalgamation.

All the smelting is done at Poullaouen; and we had at first intended to go thither after our visit to Huelgoat. But, as the mere process of smelting is nothing new or curious, and the mine is in all respects inferior to that of the Huelgoat, and there yet remained some things to visit in the environs, we determined to devote the day which we had destined to Poullaouen to another ramble in this neighbourhood.

Notwithstanding our load, and the beauty of the evening, which tempted us now and then to linger as we walked through the wood, we were at Madame Madec's door before ten, and were agreeably surprised to find that she had guessed, as she said, that we should come back late and hungry, and was not only expecting us, but had some supper at the fire awaiting our arrival.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Arthur's Camp — Opinions respecting it — Curious "lutrin" in Huelgoat Church — "Le Menage de la Vierge" — Enormous Rocking Stone — Walk to Carhaix — Description of the town — Characteristics of the district of Cornouaille — Stationary character of the Population—Legend of the foundation of Carhaix— King Grandlon "the mild" — His Epitaph — His Daughter — Story of the "Calvairiennes" at Carhaix—La Tour d'Auvergne — Superstition — And Traditional Remedies.

THE next day our morning's walk before breakfast was to a remarkable hill, on the other side of the valley, on the top of which are the remains of an ancient entrenchment and fortification, which the tradition of the peasants calls Arthur's Camp. It is a large area, enclosed by an entrenchment of considerable height, of irregular, quadrilateral form, whose greatest diameter is something less than four hundred paces. At one end there is a mound of earth, evidently the work of man, and on it may be traced the foundations of a large tower. In the centre we observed what seemed to be the remains of a well.

As M. Freminville remarks, the tower, which has evidently existed here, is sufficient proof that this singular fortification was something more than a camp; seeing that a camp is, in its nature, temporary, while this tower must evidently have been a work intended to endure.

As to the name, it does not appear necessary to refer to the celebrated hero of the round table all the legends which are attributed to chiefs of that name. For the name Arthur was a favourite one; and the ancient Armoricans had many celebrated chiefs, so called. In fact, it is probable that, as in the case of the feats of ancient Hercules, many of the deeds and adventures heaped by the romancers on the head of their favourite hero ought in justice to be divided among a number of his namesakes.

If, however, this fortification is to be referred at all to the heroic age of Britanny — and the peculiarities which it offers make it extremely difficult to assign any other period to it — a very interesting and singular conclusion must be drawn from the existence of it; a conclusion which other similar remains of strongholds found in Britanny would tend to confirm: namely, that the Bretons must have had at a very remote epoch a system of fortifi-

cation far more advanced than that known at the time in any other part of France. For hardly any instance occurs there of other fortifications than wood, before the ninth century; whereas, if this and similar remains be referred to the period to which tradition assigns the building of it, the Bretons must long before have had fortifications of stone.

M. Freminville is of this opinion, and promises a work expressly on the subject. He thinks that this "Arthur's Camp" must be supposed the residence of one of those Breton chiefs of the fifth or sixth century, who were the leaders of independent tribes, and who, from possessing absolute power, were termed kings by the earliest chroniclers, but whose real designation, among the Celtic nations, was "Jarle." This the French have inaptly rendered "Comte;" while we have preserved the ancient appellation in our title, "Earl." This Jarle, then, was the occupant of the stone tower, while his soldiers and followers inhabited wooden buildings disposed within the protection of the entrenchment.

There is, however, one way of explaining these ancient remains, which does not appear to have occurred to M. Freminville. Why may not the earth-works be remains of the Celts, and date from the century to which

he refers them, and the towers have been erected at a much later period? We know that single isolated towers frequently constituted the earliest feodal residences; and as it was of course the chief object of the builders of these to place them in positions of strength and safety, why should they not have chosen a spot which they found already fortified to their hands in a certain degree, and which was itself selected by its earliest possessors for its advantageous and commanding situation?

From "Le Camp d'Artus," we returned to our inn to breakfast; and afterwards went into the church to look at an old reading-desk there, which has some figures on it apparently of a very high antiquity. The desk in question is no longer used, its place having been supplied by a new one, and it stands in a corner of the aisle, mere lumber. The "Messieurs de la fabrique," however, have some notion that it is curious and of value, for two of them came to me to ask me to buy it. After a good deal of debate between themselves, they demanded three hundred francs, and I should have been much tempted to close with them, had it not been for the difficulty of transporting my purchase, when I had acquired it. I have since, moreover, ascertained

that I should have been acting in contravention of a recent law, which forbids all curés or guardians of churches to part with any thing out of their church, or even to make any alteration or reparation, without the authorization of the minister of the interior.

It is the pedestal alone of this desk which is remarkable. It is triangular, and on each of the three faces there is carved in relief a figure, of a character and execution so very unlike those belonging to christian art at any period, as to puzzle the antiquaries extremely.

The first of these figures is that of a young man standing beneath a sort of canopy, adorned with branches of misletoe. He has his hair long and floating, exactly like that of the present day, his arms and legs naked, and his body clothed with a sort of cloak, precisely such as the "sagum" of the ancient Gauls is described to have been. He carries on his right shoulder a long mace; and there can be little doubt that the figure was intended to represent an ancient Celt. On the next side is an evident representation of Love, in the figure of a young man nearly naked, with classic drapery around his person, a lighted torch in his right hand, and a dart, which he is on the point of hurling, in his left. The third figure is that of a female, with her breast and

arms naked, and a robe long behind, but so short in front as to leave one leg entirely bare. She has a veil on her head, hanging down behind. She holds a cup in her right hand, from which she appears about to drink, and in her left an amphora. In short, it is the figure of a Bacchante. Now it will be admitted that these are strange ornaments for the pedestal of an orthodox "lûtrin" in a Catholic church; and yet, as the material is wood, the sculpture can hardly be supposed to have been executed in ante-Christian times. M. Freminville says, "L'exécution de ces sculptures est du style le plus barbare, sans correction, sans goût, sans dessin." I cannot agree with him entirely. The execution indeed is barbarous, but the conception is not. Nor can I think that such designs as I have described could have been the invention of a Celtic artist, of the third and fourth century, as he says he should have considered them, had they been executed on stone. As it is, he thinks that they are the production of some artist of the middle ages, who copied them accurately from some stone monument of the Celts, then existing in this place.

I cannot think this likely. If the stone remained, why undertake the labour of copying it in a more perishable and less handsome

material? I cannot but suspect that this triangular figure was itself constructed for an altar to some Pagan divinity. Is it necessary for this to go back to times so remote as those to which M. Freminville refers? Are we not told that, in the isle of Ouessant, there were within fifty years persons professing paganism? Do we not yet find decided remnants of the old religion lingering still in the minds of the people in various parts of the country? It seems to me that, when these things are considered, it does not appear at all an improbable supposition that the figures in question were carved, at some period of the middle ages, for the ornaments of a pagan altar. It must be remembered that Huelgoat is situated in one of the most secluded and thinly-peopled regions of Britanny. This mountainous district, still covered to a great extent with forest, was doubtless still more so four or five hundred years ago; and, in these rarely frequented recesses, it is not unlikely that remnants of that religion may have found a shelter, which, for so many years, openly disputed with Christianity the possession of the entire country. These poor and still almost uncultivated hills are, moreover, in the centre of the country, distant alike from either coast,

and removed therefore from the influence of those early teachers and preachers, who almost invariably arrived from more civilised countries by sea.

The greatest degree of barbarism, of filth, of ignorance, of misery, of prejudice, and of superstition, is still to be found in the inland districts of the Ménéz range; and they must ever, as now, have been behind the rest of Britanny in the race of civilization.

I have since almost regretted that I did not close with the offer of the Huelgoat church-wardens, and endeavour to carry off this very curious relic. For, though the law which forbids the removal of any thing from the churches is, in itself, a useful and beneficial one, yet these ancient figures are likely to perish in obedience to it. The bottom part of the pedestal has already suffered much from the dry rot. The feet of one of the figures are nearly lost; and if it continues a useless piece of lumber in its present damp corner of the nave, it will probably soon be entirely destroyed.

We went from the church to see a strange romantic grotto, called "Le Menage de la Vierge," and an enormous rocking-stone near it. This "menage" is formed in the same way as the "gouffre" spoken of above. But,

in this instance, it is possible for an active climber to descend into the abyss, and to find his way out by the course of the stream below. In this case, however, the pile of rocks, of whose fantastically formed recesses the Virgin has availed herself as a residence, does not occur in a valley, but in the midst of an open down ; and the water which runs at the bottom finds its way thither by a subterranean course of some distance. The stream passes from the cavern through a sort of gorge, which opens from this point in the hill, and is filled with loose masses of rock. All these rocks, and those of the entire district, are granitic.

The rocking-stone, or "roulers," as it is termed in the country, is an enormous mass, nearly of the form of a double cube, which rests upon the living rock, here protruding through the thin soil, in such a manner that a single hand may make it rock. It is very near the "Menage de la Vierge," and is, in my opinion, a fortuitous result of the same convulsion of which so many traces are to be seen in the neighbourhood. The antiquaries, however, consider it a work of the Druids. Its dimensions are about twenty-two feet long by nine or ten wide and high. One reason why I do not believe it to have been the work

of the Druids is, that I could not find that the peasants of the neighbourhood held it in any especial veneration.

We returned again in the evening to visit the "Menage of the Virgin" by moonlight; and this is the time for those to go who would "view it aright;" though, in truth, he who would descend into our Lady's chamber by that fitful and deceptive light, has need of a firm hand and foot, and a steady eye. When once down, however, by the margin of the dark-looking water, the effect of the pale beams playing here and there upon the grey stones, and reflected in the black surface of the still, cold stream, the deep shades of the greater part of the cavern, and the half-seen, uncertain outline of its recesses, produce an effect which must be striking to any eye; but which, when heightened a little by the colouring of imagination, assumes, from the grandiose features of the scene, and the death-like silence and stillness of the place, a degree of ghastly solemnity and awful majesty which approaches the sublime.

The moonlight walk, too, over the quiet down, covered in every direction with huge, pale, ghost-like, rocky monsters, is delightful; and, as I returned to Huelgoat, I was angry with myself for having, in a more matter-of-

fact mood, in the morning disbelieved the mighty mass of the "roulers" to be a relic and a memorial of those despot priests, who might well be supposed to have chosen this wild waste as one of the scenes of their mysterious worship.

It was our plan to sleep yet another night at Huelgoat. For, though our quarters there were not particularly desirable, positively considered, we feared that they might, in this wild district, be comparatively so; or, in more vernacular phraseology, that we might go farther and fare worse. On these grounds, we determined to visit Carhaix on the next day, and return to our beds at Huelgoat.

As this made rather a long day's work, we took care to be en route right early, with the intention of breakfasting at Carhaix. Our road lay through a bleak and uncultivated country, wild and dreary-looking, but, by no means, devoid of romantic scenery. Carhaix M. Souvestre calls a "triste ville qui s'élève au bord d'une rivière immobile, telle que les guerres de la Ligue l'ont laissée, fangeuse, délabrée, noircie, toute lépreuse de misère et d'ignorance. Là vous trouvez," he goes on, "la vraie Cornouaille, la Cornouaille avec ses vieilles mœurs. Carhaix est encore une ville

du moyen âge, aux rues sans pavés, entremêlées de champs labourés, de courtils verdoyants. La voie publique y fait partie de chaque demeure. La moitié de la vie des habitans s'y passe. Les enfans mangent assis sur les seuils; les femmes filent en chantant devant les portes; les vieillards sont étendus au soleil le long de la place publique."

This can hardly be said to be an exaggerated description. But I could not perceive that it was more especially appropriate to Carhaix than to any other of the towns among the hills. At the same time, notwithstanding what the author says about "la vraie Cornouaille," it must be admitted that the worst features of the picture do not accurately represent every part of that district.

It is true that the whole of the ancient bishopric of Cornouaille may be considered much behind the Léonais in civilization and improvement. But Nature has been as kind to the southern coast of Finistere as to the northern; and the fertility of the soil, and the advantages of a seaward position, have made a wide difference between that part of Cornouaille and the hilly districts of the interior, to which alone the description given,

by M. Souvestre, will strictly, and in all its details, apply.

It was this delightful town, this captivating, genial spot, which we had walked five leagues to see! Even so. Nor was I for my part at all dissatisfied with my expedition and its results. Beauty, either of nature or of art, will hardly be the leading object of a traveller in this country, though, of the less aspiring style of scenery, Britanny has much that is pleasing and peculiar. But the main source of interest to a stranger in this province — the grand curiosity of the country — is the people. This it was that I had come to Britanny to see; and it was highly interesting to me to find a specimen of this ancient nation preserved among the depths of these forests and hills so safely, that the jolting and shaking of these stirring times has never disturbed its slumbering immobility — a deep still pool in the ocean of life, which the mighty storm of the revolution that made the vast waters of society to toss and boil from shore to shore, passed over, almost without ruffling the surface of it.

Carhaix is an extremely ancient town, one of the oldest in Britanny. Some antiquaries have supposed it to have been founded by the

Roman General Ætius, and to have been called after him Ker-Ætius, Ker being the same word as the Welch Caer, and signifying a place or town. This opinion seems, however, to be quite deficient in proof and probability. Both Strabo and Ptolemy speak of a city called Vorganum, which the table of Peutinger places between Brest and Pontivy, at fifteen leagues from the first, and eight from the second of these towns, a position which answers perfectly to that of Carhaix. As to its name, it is said to have received it from Ahès, the daughter of King Grandlon, who possessed it in the fifth century, and from whom it was called Ker-Ahès.

This Grandlon, surnamed the Great, makes an important figure in the half-fabulous period of the early American history. He is styled, in the chartulary of Landevence abbey, "Grandlonus gratiâ Dei rex Britonum, necnon ex parte Francorum." He was a usurper; is suspected, with good reason, to have been concerned in the murder of his predecessor, king Salomon, and is described by the ancient chroniclers as "feroci animo regni negotia pertrectans." Here, however, is his epitaph, which Albert-legrand has preserved, and which might for-

merly have been read on his tomb in Landevenec abbey,

"Hoc in sarcophago
Jacet inclyta magna propago,
Gradlonus magnus,
Britonum rex, *mitis ut agnus!!*
Noster fundator,
Vitæ cœlestis amator.
Illi propitia
Sit semper Virgo Maria.
Obiit anno 405."

Upon this somewhat injudiciously chosen topic of the murdering usurper's lamb-like mildness, Daru, the historian, observes— "mais on ne peut pas chercher à mettre d'accord les épitaphes et l'histoire." Doubtless the good monks of Landevenec were inclined to be as civil as they could to "noster fundator," but I suspect that they thought more of rhyme than of reason, and that the unscrupulous assertion, which offends the historian's love of truth, was produced not so much by flattery as by the stern necessity of finding a rhyme for "magnus." It will be observed that the lines are intended for hexameters; but the old Dominican, who has preserved them, thinking rhyme, I suppose, more important than scanning, has printed them as I have given them.

The daughter of this worthy monarch seems to have inherited a portion of her fa-

ther's lamb-like disposition, and to have left a somewhat similar reputation behind her. Fourteen hundred years have not been sufficient to erase from the minds of the peasants of this district the memory of Ahès and her crimes. More enduring materials than either brass or stone, for transmitting the memorial of facts from age to age, they have never ceased to perpetuate the story of her abominations; and the traditions of her excesses and the horrors she perpetrated are the favourite subject of many a winter evening's tale among the gossips of the canton.

A sort of jaw-hole, or abyss, moreover, is still pointed out between Huelgoat and Carhaix, which this vixen of a princess used as a second — or rather first — Tour de Nesle. Every morning the lover of the preceding night was pitched by the orders of this abandoned woman into this terrible hole. And, what is still more remarkable, you may still hear the noise of the victim's groans and sighs rising incessantly from the secret recesses of this awful pit, with a low, melancholy, hollow sound, resembling, some think, the noise of distant water running among echoing caverns.

In this remote town of Carhaix we looked with interest on a spot where, in the year

1793, there passed one of the most touching and characteristic scenes to which that eventful era gave birth.

There was a convent of "Calvairiennes" at Carhaix, which, at the period referred to, was inhabited by more than sixty women, most of them refugees from other religious houses which had been destroyed, who had found an asylum in this obscure place, vainly hoping that they might there escape the vigilance of their persecutors. The municipal authorities of the town were willing enough to connive at their existence, and allow them to live in peace. For, in all probability, from being zealous republicans in heart, they knew that the Calvairiennes were of great service to the town, that they maintained many poor, and that their vast buildings served as a general hospital for the widows and orphans of the commune.

They might probably, therefore, have escaped the notice of the superior authorities, had it not unfortunately happened that a letter from their late bishop, then residing as an emigrant at Salisbury, was intercepted, and, of course, read. The consequence was, that orders were immediately sent from the departmental authorities, to turn out the poor nuns of Carhaix from their shelter.

The officers of the municipal administration, therefore, proceeded to the convent, to inform the Calvairiennes of the decree, and require their obedience to it. The superior heard their message, and quietly replied that she and her nuns had vowed not to quit those walls, and that by their own will they would never do so. In vain the officers argued and remonstrated ; in vain they returned day after day, again and again, to the convent, and set forth the absolute necessity of submission, and represented the consequence of resistance.

Then was seen an instance of the strong moral courage, which may be generated by high principle, and an unflinching reliance on God's providence. Although both shocked and terrified by the unwonted intrusion of these rude men within their walls, though trembling and in tears, these timid, weak women still steadily refused to quit their convent, unless force were used to compel them ; and declared that, as with unyielding will, so, to the last power of their bodily strength, they would cling to the bars of their parlour-grating, till dragged from them by superior force.

Great was the embarrassment of the town-officers. They were, perhaps, themselves unwilling to proceed to extremities, and,

besides, felt by no means certain that they could do so with safety. For a large number of the poor people of the town and surrounding district were assembled around the house of their benefactresses. And the men of Cornouaille, especially the population of these wild hills and forests, are not like the peaceable inhabitants of the fertile Léonais. The expressive faces, and angry murmurs of these men, quick in their passions, skilful in the exercise of their formidable weapon, the ever-ready "pen bas," and prompt to use it, made it evident to the authorities that their object was not likely to be accomplished without disturbance, and, probably, bloodshed.

Thus the time accorded by the superior authorities of the department elapsed, and nothing had been done.

The next morning a troop of soldiers appeared escorting a convoy of several carts. A presentiment of what was about to happen had caused a vast crowd to assemble from the first break of day around the gates of the convent. But the soldiers were in considerable force and mounted. All idea of resistance was useless. What could a poor unarmed crowd of peasants do against a disciplined body of cavalry? Besides, even if they could have succeeded in deferring the ejection of

the poor nuns for a short time, the republican authorities would not have suffered themselves to be foiled by the peasants of a miserable district of Britanny. The feelings of the people, therefore, were shown only in murmurs and execrations.

At the moment when the soldiers rode up, the crowd were mostly upon their knees, receiving in their wooden porringers the broth which a sister of the house was distributing for the last time among their pensioners. A loud and angry cry arose as the officers rode through the crowd towards the sister at the door of the convent; but the cowed peasants drew back to avoid being trampled on by their horses, and left a lane open for them to pass.

"What would you?" asked the sister at the gate.

"Your superior. Where is she?" was the reply.

"In prayer, probably," returned the nun; so saying, she took from her girdle a key, which admitted him into the interior of the convent. The officers proceeded into the "parloir," and were already beginning to be impatient, when a small figure in a long black robe and white veil and hood, with a chaplet at her girdle, presented herself before them,

and demanded their pleasure, begging them to excuse her for having kept them waiting, as she had been engaged in tending a sister of the house, who was unwell.

"Madame," replied the procureur syndic, "you know the decree of the department; it was duly notified to you, and you have not obeyed it."

"It is true," said the superior.

"You are aware that the decree commands you to evacuate these premises. What is it your intention to do to-day? for no more delay can be allowed."

"My intentions are what they have ever been — to die within these walls, if God shall of his grace permit me so to do," said the old nun, crossing herself, and looking up to heaven.

"Madame!" said the syndic, "you must this day leave this place. Do not compel us to resort to measures of violence."

"Alas! sirs, we are in your power; for we are but poor helpless women. But we have vowed to remain here consecrated to God. He alone can release us from our engagement. His will be done!"

Some of the more impatient and brutal of the men present had already laid violent hands on the "grille" of wood which sepa-

rated them from the old and venerable figure who was addressing them. When she spoke thus, some of the soldiers, who had by this time penetrated to the apartment, began to attack this slight defence, and it was soon knocked into fragments by their blows. The nuns rushed into the room, and, crowding around their superior, raised the solemn chant of the *miserere* as the soldiers advanced across the ruins of the demolished "grille."

In vain the nuns were ordered to go to their cells, and take the property which belonged to them personally. They refused to do aught that could in any way make themselves accomplices to the breach of their vows, and remained motionless on their knees around their superior.

The soldiers mounted, therefore, to their chambers, and every thing that was moveable —beds, garments, furniture, books—was tied up in the sheets and coverlets, and placed in the waggons. It was not till night had cast its shade over this foul robbery, that these waggons, drawn by oxen, and escorted by a strong body of troops, were driven to the Hôtel de Ville, and there deposited as national property.

Sentries were placed at every door of the building; the evacuated chambers and culti-

vated gardens were taken possession of on behalf of the government; and shortly afterwards, these unfortunate women, innocent and unaccused of any fault, were themselves, as their goods had been, placed on carts, and so conducted by soldiers to the prison of the capital of the department.

This melancholy history cannot be concluded better than by the following extract from a letter written from Vannes by a young girl to a republican in power. It will serve to illustrate at once the feelings and the fate of these poor Calvairiennes, and to assist the reader in forming an accurate idea of the effects of the revolution on the social life of the provinces.

"Je suis orpheline: * * * voyez mes larmes, et en ayez pitié. Je n'ai garde d'excuser l'émigration de ma mère, si elle l'est; mais son motif de s'éloigner de moi, c'est que nous n'avions pas assez de pain pour deux, et elle n'a pas voulu que j'en manquasse. Ses sollicitudes ont été vaines, et le séquestre à été mis partout, jusque sur la chambre où couchait ma vieille tante, l'ancienne supérieure des Calvériennes de Carhaix.

"Mais tout ceci n'est rien; et il me faudrait des larmes de sang dour peindre ma douleur, lorsque je vis enlever par des fusiliers ma

pauvre tante religieuse. En vain je fis retentir les campagnes de mes cris ; en vain je m'efforçai de la rejoindre pour lui donner un assignat de cinquant sols, qui était la fortune de mon portefeuille. Il y a six mois qu'elle est en arrestation, et j'apprendrai en peu sa mort, car ses infirmités sont grandes, et je ne puis rien pour elle, moi qui fus obligée de venir à pied à Vannes, où je reçois du pain par charité."

There are a great many very old houses in Carhaix, which, with their profusion of wooden figures and carving, add to the ancient appearance of the town. But there is one house, in nowise remarkable in appearance, which, if I were to omit to mention, the people of Carhaix would never forgive me. It is that in which La Tour d'Auvergne was born in 1743. He was termed "premier grenadier de France," having steadily refused all higher rank than that of captain. He was killed in the campaign of the Rhine in 1800. Among many especial honours paid to his memory, it was ordered that his place should never be filled up, but that the company to which he had belonged should always henceforth be one short of its complement. He is a favourite hero with the "vieux moustaches" of the French army, and with his com-

patriots, the Bretons, ranks almost next to Duguesclin. A large extent of country may be seen from the tower of the church, but the prospect has no beauty. It presents but a repetition of the same wild bleak hills, here and there covered with forests, stretching as far as the eye can see in all directions.

All the nations of the earth, says Cambry, have their various superstitions and absurdities; but Britanny has all those of all other nations united. And no part of the country is so full of them as this district of Finistere. A number of the most absurd traditional recipes for curing maladies, avoiding accidents, or obtaining various results, are handed down from generation to generation among the peasants. Some of them are simple and intelligible enough. For example, to restore a horse that has been knocked up, you must lock him up three days in the stable, and give six sous to the rector.

It is observable that, in Lower Britanny, the incumbent of a parish is not called the "curé," as in the rest of France, but the "recteur;" while the term "curé" signifies, as with us, the assistant priest.

Many of the traditional remedies, in vogue among the peasants for diseases and injuries, consist in the application, external or in-

ternal, of simples, which may very likely be serviceable. The use of them is probably extremely ancient, and may very probably have been handed down from the Druids themselves, who were the only practisers of medicine among the ancient Celts. To those who are able to judge whether these remedies are likely to be of any real service or not, it may be interesting to hear a few of them.

For a swelling of the body, boil the root of broom in a pint of water, and let the patient drink the infusion.

For a cancer in the mouth, apply spoonwort.

For dysentery, eat a few bunches of elderberry.

Cambry has preserved a variety of others; but these, which are the shortest and simplest, will serve as a specimen.

It was about two o'clock when we started to walk back to Huelgoat, and, as we took it leisurely, it was nearly seven by the time we reached it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Agrémens of Huelgoat — Walk to Braspars — Menhir — Chapel of Branilis—Black Sheep—Interior of a Cottage among the Hills — Sick Child — Decaying Splendour of the Chapel — An Interview with a Priest — A Mayor's Nest — Mont St. Michel — View from its summit—Arrival at Braspars.

Early the next morning, we took a tender leave of "La Veuve Madec," and finally turned our backs on Huelgoat. A sketcher, a sportsman, or a mineralogist, might, if he be not nice, and can content himself with rough accommodations, pass a month there with much satisfaction. For the first, there is an infinite variety of combinations of rocks, wood, and water, with an abundant supply of picturesque figures, of both sexes and all ages. For the second, there are partridges, and hares, and trout, in any quantity he pleases to kill, wolves frequently to be met with, stags sometimes, and boars occasionally. As for the mineralogist or geologist, he would find ample sources of interest in the mines,

and the somewhat remarkable district around them, and an able and willing assistant, in his studies, in the person of the good-natured German, who holds the appointment of mineralogist and chemist to the works.

From Huelgoat it was our intention to walk to Braspars, another little town situated in the midst of the Ménéz-Arés hills. As the only route between these towns is extremely circuitous, we determined to scorn all roads, and take no other guide than a pocket-compass to direct our course over the wild open district which we had to cross.

It was not our intention, however, to steer a direct course to Braspars, for we wished to pass over the summit of Mont St. Michel, the culminating point of the Ménéz-Arés chain, and the highest ground in Britanny.

Between Huelgoat and Coatmocun the country is in great part cultivated; and it was not till after crossing, near that village, the high-road, from Carhaix to Landerneau, that we reached the open downs. In a field, near the extremity of the cultivated districts, we saw a large menhir, about twenty-eight feet high, and twenty-five in circumference. My companion wished to make a sketch of it; and, while we were sitting for this purpose on a bank under the stone wall which formed

the boundary of the field, a peasant came up, and, saluting us, inquired whether we had been able to arrange about the purchase of the "lutrin." . As this was at some distance from Huelgoat, we were somewhat surprised to find that the news of our doings should have travelled so fast, and that we should have been recognised so readily, from the description of our appearance, by this man, who had never before seen us. But this was by no means the only occasion on which we found our motions and whereabouts extraordinarily well known to persons, and in places totally unknown to ourselves. The appearance of strangers among these hills is, I suppose, sufficiently rare to make the proceedings of the most unpretending a subject of interest and speculation.

Beyond Coatmocun, the country became arid and desolate to a greater degree, if possible, than that between Morlaix and Carhaix. Hill after hill was surmounted; and the same wide extent of brown heather, with, here and there, rocks lying on the surface of the soil, stretched around us on all sides. On the summit of a hill, we passed another menhir, and not long after reached the little hamlet of Branilis; the fine trees of whose churchyard are seen for many a mile from the

barren hills which surround it, the sole patch of verdure which the eye can find to rest on in all the dreary waste.

It is incorrect, however, to call the spot which these trees overshadow a churchyard, inasmuch as the building which it surrounds is not a church, but only a votive chapel. How strange it is to find, in such a spot as this, an edifice built with all the costly splendour and ornate elegance of the best period of gothic architecture! Yet such is this secluded chapel, surrounded by its two or three wretched hovels: No population could ever have existed here for whose use this chapel could have been erected; and, in all probability, its graceful steeple and lofty nave were raised as the memorial and expiation of some desperate deed, whose memory oppressed the conscience of the devotee, who thus thought to bribe the judgment-seat of heaven.

Doubtless the founder endowed it with sufficient funds for the maintenance of a priest, and the daily performance of the mass; but these have, of course, disappeared, and service is now only rarely performed there by the rector of Locquefret, the parish in which the chapel is situated. The door was therefore locked; and we went to one of the neighbouring cottages to inquire where the key was

kept. We found three women sitting before the door, shearing one of their little black sheep.

White sheep are in Finistere to the full as rare as black ones with us—more so, I think. In the Côtes du Nord the black and white are about equal in number; but in Finistere it is very common to see whole flocks without a single white one.

We addressed the damsels who were engaged in shearing this black crop, but obtained only shakes of the head and Breton in return. At last, however, we succeeded by signs, eked out by a word or two of Breton, and by her knowledge of a word or two of French, in making one of them understand what we wanted; upon which she called out an urchin from the interior of the darksome hovel, and, pointing out to us another of the very few cottages which constituted the hamlet, sent the boy thither with us.

The dwelling I was thus conducted to was, I think, the worst I had yet seen. It had possessed one window once, but it was entirely blocked up. The apartment had an enormous chimney and hearth, with a huge heap of filth for a bed at one end, and a cow, unfenced off by any sort of partition, occupied the other.

Cambry says, speaking of the practice of lodging the cattle under the same roof with their owners, that he knows not which suffers most by the neighbourhood. I can feel no such doubt, seeing that no stable ever emitted so foul an odour as this most wretched hovel. Several fowls also occupied the fetid space, and no attempt was apparently ever made to cleanse it from the various filth caused by its heterogeneous inmates.

The mistress of this mansion was, as it seemed, alone in her dwelling spinning, when our little conductor stated to her our wishes. She got up without speaking, and, taking an enormous key from the top of a sort of press, which, with a cupboard-table, formed the principal furniture of the room, handed it to us with a stare of surprise, but in silence; and we were on the point of regaining the outer air, when we heard a child wailing. Being unable to imagine where it could be, we turned round, and saw the mother open the press, and take out of a sort of drawer at the bottom of it an infant of two or three years old, filthy, squalid, wailing in a peevish but subdued tone, and evidently very ill. Seeing us looking at the child with interest and curiosity, she pointed to it, and said, "malade—fièvre." She put a little water on its

lips, replaced it in its close, hot, stinking hole, and closed the door of the press.

Thus is Nature not only left to struggle with disease, unaided by the resources of science and skill, but to do so under every circumstance that can most assist the enemy. But some of them survive somehow, nor are the people, either adults or children, by any means an unhealthy-looking or ill-grown population; though they are for the most part in the hill districts ugly in feature and small in stature.

We returned with the key to the chapel, and, having with some difficulty turned it in its immense rusty lock, and compelled with our shoulders the heavy door to turn on its reluctant hinges, we found ourselves in what must have once been an extremely beautiful edifice. It was now, however, in a sad state of dilapidation. The pavement of the lower half of the nave had been torn up, and the roof was very much out of repair. The greatest part of the painted and gilded paneling of the roof was gone, and the bare rafters were visible, and the flags which they supported in many places offered no protection against the weather.

The eastern end was not quite so far gone towards total ruin. Enough remained to

shew the unbounded profusion of carving, and painting, and gilding, which had been lavished on the decoration of the altar and little choir. Some very handsome painted windows, too, were still entire, rich and perfect enough to make the boast of many a noble cathedral, but here disregarded, and probably soon going to destruction. There is reason to fear that it must have been something very bad to have called for such an expensive expiation.

The greatest part of a very handsome carved oak screen, between the choir and the nave, was also still perfect. There was enough of it to have fitted up a little library most beautifully, and there it is all going to decay.

As we turned to leave it all to its fate, we saw one of our sheep-shearing friends, who had taken advantage of the chapel being open to glide in and say her prayers. She was on her knees, near the door, and her lips were moving, but I was uncharitable enough to doubt whether she might not have entered as much from curiosity to see what on earth we could want in the old chapel, as from devotion; for I observed that her eyes followed our every motion. She jumped up when we reached the door, and hurried out, as if she

thought that we should lock her in without scruple, if she kept us waiting. Having seen her out, therefore, we locked the door, and took back the key to the miserable dwelling of its guardian.

I could not help coveting the beautiful carved oak I had seen going to decay in the chapel; so I determined to go to the village of Locquefret, and try, despite the law, whether the "Messieurs de la Fabrique" would be as willing to sell their oak carving as the Huelgoatians were to part with their "lutrin."

From Branilis we descended into a low wet valley, which, as well as some others of a similar description in the course of our day's walk, we crossed with some caution; as we had been warned at Huelgoat, that there were dangerous bogs among the hills we purposed crossing. We got through it with some little wetting, and then toiled up the long side of another hill, from the top of which we saw Locquefret beneath us, in a wide and partially cultivated valley.

When we got there, we asked for the house of the rector. We found scarcely any body who could speak French, but the word "recteur" was readily understood, and we were directed to a tolerably comfortable-looking house, comparatively speaking, where we

found a woman engaged in washing clothes, in a lower room. She seemed no little surprised at our demand to see his reverence; but she went to the bottom of the stairs, and screamed out something in Breton, which brought him down forthwith.

He was a tall thin man, with a face seamed with the small-pox, and a villanously disagreeable expression of countenance, wrapped from neck to heels in a very filthy cassock, and smoking a short black pipe. He heard our proposition to an end, quietly leaning against the door-post of his house, and then answered, "On ne vend pas les eglises ici, ni ce que les appartient." A little further exposition of our wishes, however, induced him so far to descend from the high ground of this general principle as to admit that he himself should have no objection at all to the removal of the screen; in fact, that he had himself wished to get rid of it, because it came between him and his audience, when he occasionally preached in the chapel; but that the people would not hear of its being touched. If, however, we would remain till next month, he would, the next time he did duty there, state the case to the people, mentioning the sum we were disposed to give, and see whether they were willing to part with the screen.

We thanked him, but said that it would hardly be in our power to remain in Locquefret for a month, and so left him. Finding, however, that his own inclinations were favourable to our object, we determined to make an attempt upon the civil authority also before we abandoned our project, and with this view inquired for the residence of the mayor. A little huckster's shop, with a board over the door, indicating that there likewise was the "poste aux lettres," was pointed out to us; and as on entering we found that his worship kept a cabaret also, we opened the negociation by calling for some bread and butter and cider. This was set before us by the mayor's daughter, who, upon our asking if we could speak with that functionary, pointed to a "lit clos," which occupied its invariable place by the side of the fire, and said that the mayor was in there. We presumed to inquire if he were indisposed, to which she replied that he had only turned in "pour se reposer un peu après son diner."

It seemed an awful thing to disturb a mayor's after-dinner nap, but we nevertheless ventured upon that very strong measure, though for some time without much prospect of success; for the worthy magistrate, overwhelmed by the fatigues of office, slept heavily;

and snorted portentously, in reply to all attempts to arouse him.

When, however, his daughter at length succeeded in awaking him, he jumped with much alacrity out of his box with all his clothes, except his coat on, and inquired what we wanted. His answer was in substance the same as the priest's. He seemed exceedingly puzzled to conceive what could be our motive for proposing such a purchase, but said that we might have all the wood in the chapel for aught he cared; but that the people would not suffer a morsel of it to be touched.

So the good folks of Locquefret may still enjoy the possession of their beautiful screen, as long as time and the weather will let them.

In the church here also the altars were very richly ornamented with carved work, gilded and painted; and the edifice has two or three painted windows, equally perfect with those at Branilis, though perhaps not quite so rich in colouring.

From Locquefret we steered a direct course towards Mont St. Michel. Its conical summit, surmounted by a little chapel, had guided us during nearly the whole of our walk, having been visible ever since we passed the village of Coatmocun. After leaving the immediate neighbourhood of Locquefret, we

did not see a single creature to break the solitary desolation of the country we passed through. There were no cattle on the hills, and, as far as we could observe, no traces of any. As we approached the higher part of the chain, the hills were many of them topped with a mass of crags, and strewed with large quantities of loose stones around their summits.

At length we reached the highest top, and stood beside the solitary little chapel, dedicated to St. Michel, which is visible from so many points of the department of Finistere. We mounted on the loose stone wall, which surrounds the building, that we might have the advantage of the utmost elevation, and thence looked out upon the wide extent of country beneath us. The prospect from this spot is said to be the most extensive in Britanny; but it is not proportionably interesting. It is much vaunted; and the various places which lie within the range of the eye are enumerated, but these cannot be said to form an agreeable view. The fact is, that all that can be clearly seen is barren hill-tops, varied only by the interchange of heather and rocks, while the country, which really is beautiful, is too far off for its features to take any effect on the scene. The view consists of a vast extent of barren hills, with a misty, indis-

tinct region beyond them, in which, as a matter of information, you know that there is much fine scenery. If the elements of this coup d'œil were exactly reversed, and that which is farthest off brought close in beneath your eye, while the bold craggy outline of the hills was sent back to form the horizon, the view would really be a magnificent one. It is said that the distance which the eye ranges over from this spot is not less than fifteen leagues.

From St. Michel's chapel we descended, steering by map and compass in as direct a line as we could to Braspars, and succeeded in soon falling into a road which brought us to that town at about six o'clock.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Braspars — Breton Cookery — A "Pardon" — Morals of the Rural Population — Marriage — The Song of the Bride — Walk to the Pardon — Mode of Females' Riding — A "Pennerez" — Variety of Costumes — Painted Glass — Churches in Finistere — Calvary at Pleyben — Exhibition and Adoration of Relics — Walk across the Hills—Anecdote—St. Eloi—Travelling Merchants—Religious Zeal — Sizum — Want of Accommodations there — Walk after dark to Landivisiau.

We found very tolerable quarters at Braspars. A recently married couple had just established a new "auberge," and were apparently determined to start in high style. The house had been all freshly fitted up with new clean-looking deal boards throughout. The staircase, the floors, the lining of our bed-room — for we had but one — and the two bedsteads in it, were all of fresh, unpainted wood, and had, therefore, a clean appearance.

We were fortunate enough, also, to find a piece of beef in the house, which we persuaded our hostess to put simply upon a gridiron, though very much against her own con-

victions of what was proper and fitting. She maintained that it would not be eatable. Nor, I believe, did we convince her to the contrary, by making a very excellent supper off it. We had the satisfaction, however, of having for once escaped swallowing the liquid oceans of grease, which almost invariably form the greatest part of a Breton dish.

We learnt, in the course of the evening, that there was to be a large "Pardon" on the morrow, at Pleyben, a little town about six miles south of Braspars. In Britanny, a "Pardon" is equivalent to a wake in England, a "fête" in France, or a "keremese" in Flanders. It is the village festival, and usually takes place on the day consecrated to the patron saint of the parish. Like every other circumstance in the life of a Breton peasant, these Pardons are connected with religious observances; and the term arises from the idea that certain ceremonies then and there performed by the frequenters of them obtain a certain *pardon* for their sins.

These Pardons have very different aspects at different places. In some villages, where there happens to be a celebrated relic, or where any peculiarly popular saint presides, the Pardon has retained its religious character and features. But in others it has become

a mere village festival, celebrated generally by observances any thing but religious, and considered, even among the peasants themselves, as meetings which the young, especially of the more tender sex, should not be over-anxious to attend too frequently.

It can hardly be necessary to remark that this caution on the part of the old folks scarcely occasions any Pardon to be unattended by the far greater part of all the lads and lasses in the neighbourhood. They are decidedly of opinion that, if their seniors are virtuous, that is no reason that there should be no more cakes and ale.

Nor does it often occur that any thing worse than a day's idleness, and perhaps a taste for dissipation, ensues to the young "paysannes" at these rustic merry-makings. The gallantry of the rural swains is rarely carried to any very dangerous lengths; and, if a faux-pas be made, it is generally mended by a marriage. A deliberate and practiced seducer would be visited with the general indignation of the country to the full as heavily as the victim of his treachery, and a rustic Don Juan would soon find himself driven forth from among the primitive society of this old-world country.

It must be clearly understood, however,

that these remarks apply only to the rural population of the villages. That of the towns, I have reason to believe, is, in this respect, as in others, profoundly immoral. And in the immediate neighbourhood of the largest, it is, I conceive, by no means rare, for the ignorant, unsuspicious, young paysannes to become the victims of systematic seducers.

The period of maidenhood is, among the Bretons, that of freedom, gaiety, and amusement. Their habits and ideas, in this, as in some other points, resemble our's much more than those of the French. A French writer on Breton manners remarks that one thing only is wanting in Britanny to render this as harmless there as it is in England—videlicet, a "Breton Gretna-Green!" It is infinitely amusing to find that our neighbours consider the privileges to be there obtained by fugitive couples as the safety-valve, which alone renders innoxious the freedom of our manners.

But if the young women of Britanny consider the years before marriage to be those of enjoyment, of pleasure, and in some degree of licence, they look forward to that great event as the certain close of all life's lighter and gayer pleasures. The marriage state is looked upon as one of privation, of submis-

sion, of care, and of labour. Even the stronger vessel looks back with some degree of regret upon the easy carelessness of life, which at his marriage he is about to lose for ever, and contemplates, with sombre seriousness, and almost with misgiving, the duties, the cares, and the responsibilities, he is going to undertake.

These sentiments are manifested in an extraordinary and interesting manner in the songs of the bride and bridegroom commonly sung at marriage festivals. M. Souvestre has translated into French a specimen of that of both the man and the woman. The latter is, as might be expected, the most true and the most touching; and I will, therefore, content myself with translating that only. It will be sufficient to show the feelings with which marriage is contemplated, and the poetry with which their language and warm imaginations can describe them.

THE SONG OF THE BRIDE.

"In other days—in the days of my youth—how warm a heart I had! Adieu my companions—adieu for ever!

"I had a heart so ardent! Neither for gold, nor for silver, would I have given my

poor heart! Adieu, my companions, adieu for ever!

"Alas! I have given it for nothing! Alas! I have placed it where joys and pleasures are no more. Adieu, my companions, adieu for ever!

"Pains and toil await me. Three cradles in the corner of the fire! A boy and a girl in each of them! Adieu, my companions, adieu for ever!

"Three others in the middle of the house! Boys and girls are there together! Adieu, my companions, adieu for ever!

"Go, maidens! run to fairs and to pardons! but for me I must do so no longer? Adieu, my companions, adieu for ever!

"For me, see you not, that I must remain here! Henceforward I am but a servant, girls; for I am married. Adieu my companions, adieu for ever!"

Such, among this singular people of sombre and gloomy temperament, is the song of the bride, sung in the midst of the nuptial festival and revelry. Its effect upon the company assembled is extraordinary. The melancholy silence which follows it is broken only by the sobs and cries of the women. For they know that the young bride's description of married life is just, and their tears flow for themselves as much as for her.

The grand occasion and scene of all those pleasures to which the young wife so affectingly bids adieu is the village Pardon. That is the great opportunity for love-making and courtship, and dancing and finery, and laughing with her equals and companions, and all that a young girl best loves.

All the beau-monde of Braspars was going to the Pardon at Pleyben the next morning; and we determined to go too, though our intended route was exactly in a contrary direction towards Morlaix.

Accordingly, the next morning we started after breakfast at about half-past eight o'clock, on our way to this Pardon. The country between Braspars and Pleyben is not near so arid and wild as that we had passed through yesterday. The fields and the farms, and their inhabitants, have still all the characteristics which distinguish the hill districts; but we had passed across the chain, and were now descending into the lower country on its southern side.

As we advanced, the road became gradually more and more crowded with groups pressing on towards the centre of attraction. As this Pardon partook of the nature of a fair, a good many peasants were driving their cows and pigs to the town, and several women were

carrying baskets of poultry, whose price was to be expended in some of the few necessaries, which the family of a Breton farmer does not supply for itself. There were the better sort of farmers mounted on their little hill horses, with very short stirrups, and long-thonged whips, with short thick wooden handles, ornamented with brass or iron work. Plenty of women, also, might be seen, some riding astride, seated upon a huge sack of straw, and some "à la planchette," as that mode is called, which is represented in the adjoining plate. This manner of sitting on a horse is very ancient. Though now remaining only among the peasants of this country, and perhaps of some other primitive districts of Europe, it was once the universal fashion for women so to ride. Brantôme, speaking of the booty taken by M. de Salvoison, at the château of Verceil, which belonged to the Duke of Savoy, says that he took a "planchette d' or," which the duchess used when she rode on horseback. Catherine de Médicis, it seems, was the first, who introduced the present fashion. For Varillas says, "Le beau tour de ses jambes lui faisoit prendre plaisir à porter des bas de soie bien tirés (desquels l'usage s'étoit introduit de son temps) ; et ce fut pour les montrer, qu'elle inventa la mode de mettre

une jambe sur le pommeau de la selle, en allant sur des haquenées."

The group represented in the plate was drawn on the spot, exactly as it is there given. The girl is probably the daughter of some farmer, well to do in the world,—a "pennerez," or heiress, and a beauty, who thoroughly knows her own value, and the important place she occupies in the thoughts and meditations of most of the young farmers of the country-side. The young man, who is talking to her, is doubtless one of her numerous lovers. She has no objection to pull up her horse, and to be seen to receive, with condescension, the fitting tribute of his compliments and very evident admiration. But for any thing beyond this—I would not give a fig for his chance. He is going to the fair on foot, and carrying a cock under his arm to sell there;—suspicious circumstances, which look very much as if he was no richer than he should be. And this same consideration of pelf is as much attended to in making an alliance among these peasants, as it is in matching the estates of two ancient and noble families.

When we came within sight of the spire of Pleyben church, we heard the bells ringing merrily; the crowd became thicker, and more



Drawn and Etched by A. Herrion

varied in costume, as the inhabitants of different communes, arriving by different routes, mixed together as they fell into the same road near the town; and the whole scene was animated and picturesque in the extreme.

Nothing is more remarkable in Finistere, than the extraordinary variety of costumes, not only of the women, but of the men also. Every commune has its own dress; and the Pardons, therefore, present a spectacle, which, to eyes accustomed to the uniform appearance of our peasants, appears more like that of a masquerade or carnival than any thing else.

Unlike the Léonard, the inhabitants of the hills delight in the most gay and contrasted colours. Violet is a very favourite colour for the coat, which is usually adorned with crimson trimmings and buttons. Gaiters, or leggings rather, for they do not cover any part of the foot, are worn of the same hue, and similarly ornamented with crimson. The "bragon bas," or enormous breeches, are almost always either of linen, or of a coarse brown woollen cloth. The coats and waistcoats of the richer farmers, and the bodices and petticoats of their wives, are usually made of a coarse cloth; those of the poorer classes of a woollen material, they call "grainé," which is full of little knots, and resembles the sort of

stuff of which great-coats are sometimes made. The poorest people of all are dressed entirely in linen, or else in a sort of coarse brown thick flannel.

The hats in Cornouaille are broad-brimmed, but not so immensely large as those of the Léonards; and, instead of the simple broad band of black velvet, which is used by the latter, they are ornamented with two or three circles of string, prepared with the gayest and most varied colours for the purpose, in the same manner that the handles of church bell-ropes are made. Between these variegated strings, the Kernewote, or Cornouaille man, puts a circle or two of silver thread, and all the various strings are united into a tassel, which hangs down behind; so that the whole effect is exceedingly gay.

Braces are altogether unknown; and the huge nether garments are sustained solely by an enormous button at the waist, or sometimes, in the case of the poorer or less smart peasants, by a large wooden skewer, which is used as a pin, and supplies the place of the button. A blue or red scarf of cotton completes this part of the dress, but it is so arranged as to let a portion of shirt be visible between the conclusion of the upper and the commencement of the inferior garments.

I believe that the most habile writer of monthly fashions, or most accomplished editor of a tailor's periodical, would be at a loss to describe all the various costumes we saw at the Pardon at Pleyben. For me to attempt it, then, would be utterly absurd, though I am aware that the few general observations I have made are very far from enabling a reader to conceive the wonderful variety of grotesque forms and gay colours which figured there.

In the church at Pleyben, as also in that at Braspars, there is some fine painted glass. The quantity of this which exists among these hills is perfectly extraordinary. If the secluded and remote position of these villages accounts for the preservation of it during the all-destroying revolution, the same circumstance makes their original possession of it the more remarkable. But, in other respects as well as in this, the village churches of Finistere are far superior to the generality of those of other countries. They are especially contrasted with those of the Côtes du Nord, which are for the most part extremely small and shabby. In Finistere, on the contrary, there is scarcely a village among these hills whose church is not architecturally an object of admiration and beauty. The only district

I ever saw, that could at all compete with this in the splendour of its parish churches, is that of the fens in Lincolnshire, where they are peculiarly large and handsome.

In the churchyard at Pleyben there is a monument of the art of the middle ages, and of the profusion of wealth expended on what were considered works of piety, which is yet more extraordinary than the splendour of the church itself. This consists of an isolated building, formed by four arches quadrilaterally arranged, and roofed in above. On this, in bas-reliefs on the sides, and in entire figures on the top, the whole of the history of our Saviour's passion, and that of many of his most remarkable miracles, is represented. I counted, on and about this extraordinary piece of workmanship, a hundred and twenty-two figures in stone, several of them on horseback. The execution, though totally devoid of taste as to the grouping and design, was not so bad as might be expected. It has not in any degree suffered at the period of the revolution, but remains very nearly as perfect in all its parts as when it left the hands of the workman. It bears the inscription "Faict à Brest par V. iv. Ozanne architecte;" and the date 1650. But it is remarkable that the costume of the numerous statues does not

belong to that period, but to the time of Charles IX. and Henry III., some hundred years earlier.

During the whole morning the church was crowded. No service was performed, but a priest was unceasingly engaged in exposing some relic to the adoration of the people. It was contained in a little silver box, in one of the sides of which was a small round piece of glass, and on the other a handle for the priest's hand. With this in one hand, and a napkin in the other, he walked continually backwards and forwards along the rails of the altar, presenting the little chest to be kissed by the kneeling peasants, who rose as soon as they had done so, and made way for others of the thronging crowd to partake of the same advantage. No one, however, left the altar without dropping a piece of money, as he rose from his knees, into a plate carried for that purpose by an attendant, who followed the priest in his continual oscillations from one side of the nave to the other. The quantity of money thus received must have been very great, for I observed that the large pewter plate was frequently emptied into some still larger receptacle behind the altar. After every kiss, the priest wiped the little bit of glass with his napkin before pre-

senting it to the next devotee—a degree of delicacy which I should hardly have expected to find in a remote village church in Britanny.

It was nearly one o'clock when we left Pleyben, and turned our faces northwards, intending to sleep at Sizun, a small town among the hills, some six or seven leagues distant. We should have liked well to have remained at Pleyben the remainder of the day, and witnessed something more of the humours of a Pardon. But this I intended to have an opportunity of doing on some other occasion; and, besides, we wished not to lose more time before our return to Morlaix. Moreover, we should have found it extremely difficult to have got a bed that night in Pleyben.

Our first stage was to Loperec, and, during this portion of our journey, we enjoyed the benefit of a tolerable cross-country road, which conducted us through a district for the most part inclosed and cultivated. Beyond this we once more entered the moorlands, and had to find our way across them as we might; for there was no longer any sort of path to guide us.

Not far from Loperec we came to an isolated farm, whose mistress, sitting spinning before

her door, was such a picturesque figure, that my companion wished to make a study of her. I thought that it was likely, from the remote situation, and the appearance of the woman and the place, that this operation might, as once before happened to us, have been objected to on the score of its connection with the black art. In the present instance, however, it was submitted to with the utmost resignation, the poor woman merely remarking that she knew perfectly well what it was for; we had come from Paris to take her portrait, that it might be sent thither for the information of the police, that they might know her appearance. Whether she had any particular reason to suppose that the police had occasion for her likeness, we had no means of ascertaining.

Beyond this spot we passed through a large oak wood, and then again emerged upon a tract of high open moors, from which we had a fine view of the sea, and the woods in the neighbourhood of Le Faou. Having nothing but the map and the compass to guide us over the wild tract of country we were crossing, we swerved from the direct line we should have followed, and got a good deal too much to the left; and thus arrived at the village of St. Eloi, which we ought to have left a good deal to the westward.

Here again we admired the light and elegant spire of the church, which, crowning the top of the hill on which St. Eloi stands, is seen from a considerable distance among the moors. The next day was to be the Pardon of the village; and to this circumstance it was due that we obtained a bottle of beer, which might have been sought here in vain at any other time. Having drunk this, which our long walk over the hills rendered very acceptable, we once more pursued our way towards Sizun, which was still about two leagues or rather more distant.

But here we again found a road, which had been lately opened, to guide us; and deemed therefore—how rashly, the sequel will show—that the fatigues and mischances of our long day's journey were at length nearly over.

Between St. Eloi and Sizun we met several of those travelling merchants, whose constant journeyings form almost the only medium of communication between the isolated towns and bourgs of this secluded district. These men belong to a class, which, except in this and one or two other remote corners of Europe, has nearly become extinct; having been superseded by an improved and enlarged system of commercial intercourse. Pedlars, indeed, may still be found in sufficient abun-

dance in many countries, though they are gradually disappearing before the effects of increasing density of population and frequency of communication. But these are but a degenerate and puny offspring of the travelling merchant of the middle ages. Almost all commercial intercourse was then carried on by the same simple machinery, which still exists in the district of Britanny, of which we are speaking, and is there still adequate to supply all the demands of the population. These active traders journey round the country with their one, two, or perhaps three, little mountain horses; purchase from farm to farm the various products of the country industry, which they transport to the larger towns and ports of the lower country, and bring back the few necessaries and fewer luxuries which the cultivators of the soil require, beyond what their native fields supply.

A little before we entered Sizun, we heard from a field by the road side a voice calling to us apparently; and, on looking round, we saw an old man vociferating evidently enough at us, for there was not another soul in sight, and that in the most violent and outrageous manner. He brandished a spade, with which he had been working, over his head; made the most seemingly frantic gestures with his

other hand; and was evidently, for some inexplicable reason or other, in a most violent passion. We went towards him, and spoke to him in French; but obtained in reply only fresh torrents of what was very evidently violent abuse and threats in Breton; and it was not till after much trouble and some patience that we discovered that it was all because we had passed a crucifix near the road, which, in truth, we had not observed, without taking off our hats to it. We forthwith hastened to repair our fault, and left him grumbling in a more subdued but far from satisfied tone.

It was about half-past seven o'clock when we reached Sizun; and our walk had been by far the most fatiguing one we had had, both from its length, and the nature of the country traversed. But when, after careful search among the various signs which indicated places of rest for man and beast, and some inquiries, we at length selected what appeared to be the best auberge in the dirty and miserable-looking town, the general appearance of things in the interior was so far from promising, that we quickly retreated into the cleaner and sweeter street. The beds looked disgusting; and the landlady was so ill-humoured and sulky, that there

was no hope of inducing her to do the best she could for us, or any chance of finding that cheerful obligingness, which has most power to persuade a tired traveller to submit cheerfully to circumstances, and make the best of a bad matter.

A short council, therefore, determined us to seek immediate relief in anathematizing, with considerable heartiness, the "bourg" of Sizun, and its inhabitants generally, and the inns and innkeepers thereof more particularly, and then to walk on, tired as we were, and benighted as we were likely to be, to the little town of Landiviseau.

This we accordingly did, setting off at a good two leagues an hour, in the hope that supper might not be altogether out of the question when we arrived. Darkness, however, was rapidly coming on. We lost our way once, and were obliged to knock up the inhabitants of a farm-house to inquire it. The good Breton, who could not speak a word of French, most kindly turned out of bed, and accompanied us till we were once more in the right road; and we at length reached Landiviseau, a little after ten, pretty fairly knocked up.

We were here on the high-road to Brest, and had, therefore, no difficulty in finding a

tolerable inn. But the people were all gone to bed, and it took a great deal of persevering battering at the door, before we could gain admittance. This, however, was at last accomplished ; and, having demolished an awful quantity of " vin ordinaire," and fallen with no nice appetite upon the remnants of the evening's meal, we turned into bed, in that only really disagreeable state of fatigue when one is too tired to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Walk to Morlaix—Church of St. Thégonec — Valley of the Dossen —Old Noblesse—Hospitable Reception—Pilgrimage to "St. Jean du Diogt" — Legend — Controversy between two Churches — Anecdote of the Duchess Anne—Walk to St. Jean—Churchyard —Pilgrims—Mendicants — Fine Actress — Various Costumes of Pilgrims—Wreckers — Anecdote — Pilgrims at the Altar — The Procession — The Church Banners — "Salutation of the Banners"—Origin of the Practice — Fires on St. John's Eve — Their Origin—Evening of the Pilgrimage—Illumination of the Bonfire —Fireworks—Superstitions—Walk back to Morlaix.

The next morning we both got up feverish and unrefreshed from our yesterday's over-fatigue and restless night. We were, however, early on the road to Morlaix, which we purposed reaching before breakfast. The distance from Landiviseau is rather more than four leagues.

Soon after leaving the little town, which contains nothing remarkable of any kind, we saw to the south of the road the splendid tower of Lampol church, rising with its elegant and fine proportions to a great height.

We must have been very near it last night, when we strayed from our road in the dark.

About half way between Landiviseau and Morlaix is the large village of St. Thégonec, much celebrated throughout Britanny for its church. It is a large and lofty edifice, built almost entirely of the much-vaunted Kersanton, a sort of fine granite, peculiar to Britanny, and found there only in one or two spots, and in small quantities. It works much more easily than common granite, and assumes, when exposed to the air, a very dark and slightly greenish hue. Nevertheless, I could not much admire the church of St. Thégonec. It is built in that heaviest and least graceful of all possible styles, the "renaissance," as the French choose to term it. The fabric is vast, gloomy, and darksome, and, to my taste, superlatively ugly.

There is in the churchyard another work of a similar description with that we saw at Pleyben, but the sculptures are not nearly so numerous or so well executed.

We arrived at Morlaix, as we intended, in time for the ten o'clock breakfast at our old quarters, at the Hotel de Paris; which, together with a warm bath, and the absence of any more violent exercise during the remainder of the day than a lazy stroll along

the banks of the river, entirely recruited us after our forced march of yesterday. Among sundry other conveniences and agrémens, Morlaix has two excellent establishments of baths, at which the charge for a warm bath, including a profusion of linen, brought to you hot from the fire, is sixteen sous.

In the afternoon we strolled a considerable distance down the banks of the river Dossen. For the first mile or mile and a half from the town, a promenade has been planted along the side of the stream, under the shadow of whose fine trees the Morlaisians are wont to take their evening walk. The sides of the valley are richly clothed with wood, and adorned with the mansions of several of the old noblesse, who have been fortunate enough to recover their property and paternal dwellings, and who live here in a happy and dignified retirement, unaffected by the series of phantasmagoric changes which pass in such unceasing succession over the political sky of France.

We met, as we rambled on down the stream, a very large number of boats coming up with the tide, laden with sea-sand. This is brought up from the coast in very considerable quantities for manure; and the little fleet thus laden gave an animated air of picturesque

activity to the scene. Most of the boats were propelled by a single sail of a dingy red colour; but there were some which, for lack of such a labour-saving contrivance, were driven on by the painful exertion of a pair of oars. It was disagreeable to think that the quantity of sand conveyed so far by so much strenuous industry of the poor "cultivateur," would suffice only to improve so few square yards of soil.

We returned to the Hotel de Paris to dinner at five, and spent the evening in one of those delightfully situated mansions, whose fortunate position, and beautiful grounds, overlooking the river, we had admired in our morning walk. We had a letter of introduction to the owner of one of these, and, both upon this and upon another occasion, we were indebted to his frank and elegant hospitality for an opportunity of appreciating justly the difference between the gentlemen of the old régime and the citizens of "La jeune France." We profited much also by this gentleman's accurate knowledge of Brittanny, and that of his son, and by their philosophical estimate of the character of the people.

Among a variety of other useful hints, he particularly recommended us to go to the

Pardon of St. Jean du Doigt, which was to take place on the next day. This village is on the coast, about four or five leagues to the north of Morlaix; and the Pardon is one of the most celebrated in Britanny. There are in the province three or four spots to which the peasants resort in pilgrimage on certain days, and one of the most popular pilgrimages in the country is that to St. Jean du Doigt, on the anniversary of that saint.

We, therefore, determined by all means to be among the number of pilgrims, who on the morrow would pay their devotions to the relic of the saint, which is there preserved. For the relic it is which attracts the devout. St. John himself can, of course, be worshipped any where as well as in this village. The pilgrims would not come thither in crowds merely for that. But his finger is preserved there, and that can be seen nowhere else; nor can the benefits to be derived from it by the faithful be partaken of by any other means than a journey to the spot. The history of the miraculous finger, from which the village of St. Jean du Doigt takes its name, is as follows :—

This holy relic was formerly adored at Bayeux in Normandy. It was preserved there with the greatest care, and was deemed

the richest treasure of the town. How the Baiochians became possessed of so valuable an article, history sayeth not, further than that it was brought there by one Thecla, a virgin of Normandy. But we have nothing to do with that. All that concerns us is to know how, from being the property of the good city of Bayeux, it became that of the village where it now is to be seen. And this is fortunately all matter of history.

It was once upon a time, very, very many years ago "au temps," says old Albert le Grand, "que les Anglois, après avoir occupé plusieurs années une grande partie de la France, et fait couronner leur roy dans la ville de Paris, capitale du Royaume, commencerent à estre chassez, leur fortune arrestée tout court par les Armes invincibles de ces deux foudres de guerre, Artur de Bretagne, Comte de Richemont, Conestable de France, et Jeanne d'Arc, dite communément La Pucelle d'Orleans, lesquels Dieu suscita en ce temps calamiteux pour délivrer la France de la plus grande oppression en laquelle elle s'estoit jamais trouvée, enoison l'an de grace 1437, regnant en nostre Bretagne le duc Jean V. du nom," that a young Bas-Breton was moved by a mysterious irresistible impulse to go and settle at Bayeux. He there, being a pious

youth, fell violently in devotion with this holy relic. Every hour that he could command, he spent on his knees before it. In fact, he totally neglected all the other saints, and concentrated on this finger his whole devotion; which was naturally very gratifying to St. John.

After some time he was obliged to return to his native country. But, before he left Bayeux, he went to have a last look, and say a last prayer to the favourite object of his worship. He knelt long, and regarded fixedly the precious casket which contained the yet more precious relic. It is extremely probable that, in the ardour of his devotion, he may even have stretched out his hands towards it. But he was ever afterwards quite consistent in his statement, that his enthusiasm did not carry him beyond this, and that he should never have dreamed of touching a morsel so sacred.

Nevertheless, it did so happen that the relic became lodged beneath the wristband of its faithful adorer. Some say that it was found between the skin and the flesh of the wrist. Be this as it may, there is evidently but one way of accounting for the circumstance; and accordingly, all the historians who have related the extraordinary fact concur in the

opinion that St. John chose to bestow his finger on the person who most deserved the favour; and that the digit, under the influence of the will, which in its life-time it was always wont to obey, left the case in which it was kept, of its own accord, and attached itself to the person of its young admirer.

At all events, the consequences were most striking. For, when the highly-favoured Breton started on his homeward journey, in total unconsciousness of the miracle which had been operated in his favour, the effects of the holy relic he carried with him were felt by both the animate and inanimate creation, and were shewn forth in the most marvellous manner. In every village, through which he passed, the bells began to ring in the steeples, unmoved by mortal bell-ringers. As he passed through the fields, the birds all came and hovered about his head, uttering songs of more than usual sweetness. The trees, as he passed along, all bowed low to salute him; insomuch that he was seriously impeded in his journey by the perpetually recurring necessity of returning their civility. Celestial voices hailed him from the skies, and, whenever the earth was overshadowed by a cloud, bright sunshine still ever illumined the spot on which he stood.

This was all very complimentary, doubtless, and the young Breton could not but feel highly flattered. Still, as he could in nowise account for the honours paid him, either to himself or others, it was perplexing ;—especially, when the inhabitants of a small town, through which he passed, envious, doubtless, of all these marks of honour shewn to the young stranger, accused him of sorcery, and threw him into prison.

Here his confidence in heaven did not desert him. Having devoutly prayed to God and the saints, especially to St. John, he lay down in his cell, and went to sleep. The most delightful dreams attended his slumbers. Well-known scenes of verdant vales and broom-grown hills, and sweet sounds of lowing herds, and songs of birds, seemed to be around him ; and when he awoke, instead of the dark cell and cold stones of his prison, he saw around him the familiar localities of his native parish. Close to the spot on which he awoke, there was, and is still, a fountain, which has ever since that day been called "Feunteun ar bis," or Fountain of the Finger.

Hard by, was a chapel dedicated to St. Meriadec, the bells of which immediately began to ring of themselves. He rushed to the

altar, to offer up his thanks to heaven, for his miraculous deliverance; and, as he passed, the trees on both sides, near the fountain, bowed to him as before;—a posture, which, in everlasting memory of the fact, they have ever since retained.

But no sooner had he reached the chapel, than the cause of all these marvels became apparent, and perfectly intelligible. For, in the same instant that he prostrated himself before the altar, the finger was seen lying upon it. He was at no loss to recognize it instantly; and, after having paid his adorations to it himself, with more energy and devotion than ever, he ran to let all the neighbours know the good fortune that had befallen their village. The joy and gratitude to St. John were universal; poor St. Meriadec went to the wall; nobody moved a finger to save him, and a new church to St. John was built on the site of his chapel.

Since that time, Popes and Cardinals, Kings and Bishops, nobles and peasants, have competed with each other, in shewing honour, and favour, and protection, to the church of St. Jean du Doigt. Many miracles have from time to time been done there, of various descriptions; but the finger and the holy fountain, which springs near the spot,

where it first landed in Britanny, are especially famous for curing all diseases and imperfections of the eyes. Crowds of pilgrims from all parts of Britanny throng thither on the saint's anniversary, Nor is it only the blind, or the weak-eyed, who are anxious to avail themselves of the benefits held out to all true believers in the power of the holy relic. For, as Dr. Aldrich judiciously observed with regard to drinking, it is desirable, not only because one is dry, but also because one may be by and bye. So the good Bretons apply to St. John, not only because their eyes are bad, but also in order to prevent them from ever becoming so for the future.

The only circumstance which seems to cast the least unpleasant shade of doubt over this history, is the awkward fact that the Maltese strenuously maintain that they are in possession of this same finger. For it is the forefinger of the right hand that each insists upon. No other finger will, in the least degree, content either party. For it was with this finger that the Baptist pointed to our Saviour, when he announced him to the multitude assembled on the banks of Jordan. Any other finger would be comparatively valueless; and great,

therefore, has been the contest between the two churches.

The old Dominican, Albert le Grand, is sadly puzzled how to arrange the matter satisfactorily to all parties. After summing up all the evidence, he endeavours to compromise the matter, by supposing that either church possesses part of the finger in question; honestly admitting, that there is but a joint of it in Britanny. If, however, after this candid and handsome admission, the Maltese should persist in maintaining that they have an entire finger,—then, he concludes, "il faut dire que c'est un autre Doigt de la main dróite, ou l'Index de la gauche: *car* nos Bretons roudroient mourir pour soustenir que ce qu'ils en ont est l'Index de sa main droite."

It is impossible not to yield to so conclusive an argument.

It was this celebrated fore-finger that we determined on visiting the next day. The eve of St. John, the Baptist, is, in many countries, still kept with various ceremonies; and, in every part of Britanny, it is observed with much veneration, and a multitude of superstitious usages. Of course all these are rigorously and zealously adhered to in the parish of St. Jean du Doigt; and we were told that we could not have a better oppor-

tunity of observing some of the most remarkable superstitions of the country.

After breakfast, therefore, on the next day, we set out to walk to St. Jean du Doigt by the road that the good Duchess Anne, as she is almost invariably called by the historians of the country, opened from Morlaix to that village, for the express accommodation of the pilgrims resorting thither. The Duchess was one of the Finger's most zealous worshippers, and presented to it the case in which it is kept, and sundry other valuable knick-nacks, which are still preserved in the church. Upon one occasion, when her Highness had a bad eye, she sent for the relic, and the priests did all they could to bring it. But scarcely had they got beyond the church door, when it broke away from them, and flew back to its place on the altar—thus plainly indicating that if the Duchess had occasion for its services, she must condescend to come to it, instead of sending for it. This she accordingly did, with much penitence and humility.

We left Morlaix by the picturesque fauxbourg of Troudousten, which lines the side of the valley with its irregular collection of buildings; and then traversed the shady woods of Tréfeunteniou, and the deep valley of the Dourdu. Beyond this we crossed a

wide plain of fertile soil, belonging to the rich parishes of Plouezoch and Plougasnou. As we advanced, we caught sight of the Chateau de Taureau, rising on its isolated rock from the midst of the sea. Many a legendary tale, and much of interesting history, connected with this chateau and the various prisoners who have at different times been inmates of its dungeons, might be told, if time and space permitted. Farther on we crossed the little stream of the Mesqueau, and soon after arrived at the object of our pilgrimage.

All this time we had been journeying amid a crowd of all ages and sexes, who were bound to the same point, and which became denser as we approached the village. We made directly for the church, as the grand centre of interest; and, having reached the churchyard, found ourselves in the midst of a scene, which it is almost as difficult adequately to describe, as it is impossible ever to forget.

The church is a large building, with a handsome tower, standing in the midst of an area, which is but little encumbered with gravestones. This was thickly crowded with a collection of men, women, and children, more motley in appearance than can readily be conceived by any one who has not seen the

never-ending variety of Breton costume. The churchyard was bounded on part of one side by a long straggling building, which had been turned into a cabaret for the occasion. The door and front of this house were on the side looking away from the church; but a window opening into the churchyard had been converted into a temporary door, for the more ready passage of the pilgrims from one to the other of the two occupations, drinking and devotion, which, on a pilgrimage, as for the most part elsewhere, form the principal amusements of a Breton's life.

In the parts of the inclosure farthest from the church were erected a quantity of booths, beneath which were exposed for sale innumerable specimens of all the various trumpery which forms the machinery of Romish devotion. Pictures and figures of saints, especially of St. John the Baptist, of every possible size, form, and sort; chaplets of various materials; bottles of water from holy fountains; crucifixes, crosses, and calvaries, &c., were the principal articles. Amid these, other stalls were devoted to the more mundane luxuries of nuts, rolls, figs, sausages, prunes, biscuits, apples, crêpe, &c. By the side of the pathway leading to the principal door of the church the dealers in wax and tallow candles

had stationed themselves. The consumption of these, and the supply provided for it, were enormous.

The thing that most struck me after the first glance at the various heterogeneous parts of this strange scene, was an equable and constant motion of that part of the crowd who were nearest to the church, around the walls of the building; and, on pressing forwards, I found an unceasing stream of pilgrims walking round the church, saying prayers, and telling their beads. Many performed this part of the ceremony on their bare knees.

Just outside the moving circle thus formed, and constituting a sort of division between it and the rest of the crowd, were a row of mendicants, whose united appearance was something far more horrible than I have any hope of conveying any idea of to the reader. Let him combine every image that his imagination can conceive of hideous deformity and frightful mutilation; of loathsome filth, and squalid, vermin-breeding corruption; of festering wounds, and leprous, putrifying sores; and let him suppose all this exposed in the broad light of day, and arranged carefully and skilfully by the wretched creatures whose stock in trade this mass of horrors constitutes,

so as to produce the utmost possible amount of loathsomeness and sickening disgust; and when he has done this to the extent of his imagination, I feel convinced that he will have but an imperfect idea of what met my eyes at St. Jean du Doigt.

I have walked through hospitals, and I have witnessed many scenes of human suffering, degradation, and misery; nor am I one of those whose eye cannot endure to look on that which is unpleasant. But the one turn round the church, which I made with the crowd of pilgrims, produced an effect upon me which I cannot even now recall without pain; and I would not have walked that fearful circle again, and a second time have looked upon all that was there strewn in my very path, and spread out beneath my eyes, for any common consideration.

Each horrible object continued all the day in the position he had taken up, and, in many instances, in attitudes which it appeared scarcely possible to retain so long. One man lay on his back on the ground, while both his bare legs were raised high in air, and sustained in that position by crutches. Of course each studiously placed himself so as most to expose that particular affliction which qualified him to take his place among the sicken-

ing crew. All vociferated their appeals to the charity of the crowd incessantly, and most of them appeared to receive a great many alms from the pilgrims. Some gave a small coin to every one of the revolting circle. In many instances we observed change demanded by the giver, and produced readily by the miserable object of his charity. Many gave part of the provisions which they had brought with them in their wallets from their distant homes.

One group of beggars particularly struck us, the more so that it could be looked on without so much disgust as almost all the others. It consisted of a woman and five infants. Many others had children horribly disfigured in various ways; but this woman seemed to rest her claim to charity solely on the number, and dirtiness of herself and her offspring. For they did not appear to have any thing else the matter with them. They were all five quite young; and it seemed scarcely likely that they were all her own children. They lay all together in a little straw, close to the path of the pilgrims, round the church, and, apparently, in imminent danger of being trodden under foot by the crowd. She stood by them, and begged, as it seemed, with more success than most of her competitors;

for almost every one gave her either money or food. She had already an immense heap of bread lying beside her children; and she constantly gave change to those who wished to divide their bounty.

The secret of her success must have been in her admirable acting. She spoke entirely in Breton, and the matter of her appeals, therefore, I could not judge of; but her manner was perfectly eloquent. She was a dark, handsome woman, with strongly marked and extremely expressive features; a deep, flashing black eye, a splendid set of teeth, and a profusion of long, black, dishevelled hair. She stood bending forwards towards the objects of her supplications, in an attitude far from ungraceful, with one hand pointing down to her litter of children, and the other employed in a variety of supplicating gestures, which her speaking eye admirably seconded. There was a play, too, in her voice, and a variety in the cadences of her speech, very different from the ordinary monotonous whine of mendicity; and she urged her suit with a warmth and vehemence which would have appeared more like an urgent and sudden appeal to save her babes from some immediate and imminent danger, than the continued and unchanging burthen of professional beg-

gary to any one who had not watched her, as we did, for many minutes.

The novelty and strangeness of the scene around the church detained us long from entering it. Fresh pilgrims continued to arrive every instant, and joined themselves to the never-ceasing procession around the building, who came, as was evident from their costume, from various distant parts of the country. Grave, decorous peasants, in black, from the neighbourhood of Morlaix and St. Thégonec, were mixed with wild-looking-travel-stained figures from the hills. Here a group might be seen, whose white flannel jackets and violet-coloured breeches shewed them to be from the neighbourhood of St. Pol de Leon; and there a blue cloak, with its short, falling cape, declared its wearer to have come from the western extremity of the northern coast. Roscovites were there, with their close, green jackets, white trousers, and red sashes; and inhabitants of the distant shores opposite to Brest, distinguishable by their glaring costume of red coats and breeches, and white waistcoats, adorned with crimson buttons.

In the midst of all these, but keeping in a knot together, might be seen a group, perhaps more remarkable than any of the others.

Their small, blue, cloth caps, very similar to those worn by the Greeks, their dingy woollen jackets, short loose linen breeches, and bare legs and feet, distinguished them sufficiently amid all the other varieties of costume. These were the men of Plouguerneau and Kerlouan, remote communes on the northern shore of the department. This district on the banks of the rivers Roudouhin and Aber-Vrach has the reputation of being the most uncivilized in Britanny. It forms an exception to the general remarks made in a former chapter on the country of the Léonais, and the character of the inhabitants is totally different from that of the Léonards in general. They are said to be a lawless and ferocious race, obtaining but a poor subsistence from their ill-cultivated soil, and willing to eke it out by less peaceful and less reputable means. And it must be confessed that their harsh and wild-looking features, bronzed sinewy limbs, and the free, vigorous manner in which they handle their "penbas," incline the imagination to give credit to the unfavourable reports which are spread concerning them.

It is on the remote and inhospitable shores from which these men come, that the practise of pillaging the wrecks of the vessels

so unfortunate as to be driven on that coast is said still to exist. It is of late years only that this most cruel species of robbery has ceased to be universally practised on all the coasts of Lower Britanny. It was suppressed with the utmost difficulty; for the peasants persisted in maintaining their right to what "God and their Ocean" had given them.

But in some points of the coast the atrocity was carried to a much greater length. For if the storms and natural dangers of this rocky and tempestuous shore did not cause a sufficiency of wrecks to glut their cupidity, every means was had recourse to, which the ingenuity of the inhabitants and their knowledge of the localities could dictate, to entice vessels to their destruction on this iron-bound coast by false signals and treacherous illusions.

One very successful mode of perpetrating this abomination was to fix a lantern in a tempestuous night to the horn of a bullock, tie his head down to his knee, and so turn him out upon the beach, or the downs above it. The motion of the light, up and down, as the animal walked about thus tied, resembled very closely that of a light on board a vessel tossed by the sea, and thus served fearfully well to delude ships into the belief

that the land was distant, when, in fact, they were close upon it.

Whether or not this crime is still perpetrated by the inhabitants of the rude communes on the banks of the Aber-Vrach I do not know. I took some pains to ascertain the fact, but the information I received was so contradictory, that it was impossible to draw any conclusion from it.

A lady, whom we travelled with in a diligence, said that she knew a priest who told her that he had done all he could to prevent the practice of wrecking in his parish, or at least to moderate the horrors of it, with very little success. He had been compelled, he said, by his parishioners to pray for wrecks; and, when they had occurred, he had run down among the crowd to the beach, crying out, (in Breton, of course, though the words were repeated to us in French) "Pillez donc, mes amis! Pillez! mais ne tuez pas!" If this were true, and it is difficult to find any reason for supposing it to be otherwise, these deeds must have been perpetuated at no very distant time.

The individuals, however, who have led me into this digression respecting the practice of wrecking, though savage and ferocious-looking enough, had come to St. Jean du Doigt,

like the rest, for a peaceful and religious purpose.

Each freshly arrived party, as they entered the churchyard, fell into the ranks, and, muttering as they went, commenced the tour of the church; and, having performed that, some more, some fewer times, proceeded next into the interior, and struggled onwards through the crowd towards the altar. This was no easy matter to accomplish. We followed into the church a recently arrived party of very poor-looking pilgrims from the hills, whose liberal alms-giving we had been observing with surprise and interest, and endeavoured to make our way towards the altar in their wake.

The church was large; but it was crowded to such a degree, that it was absolutely difficult to find room to stand within the doors. By degrees, however, and by dint of long perseverance and much striving, we at length got near the principal altar. A narrow passage along the front of the rails of this had been partitioned off, into one end of which the crowd struggled, and issued from the other.

Within the rails was a priest, carrying the Finger in its little case, and applying it to the eyes of the people, one after another, as fast as he possibly could. Running the whole

ength along the top of the rails of the altar was a sort of box, about four inches broad, by six deep. The top consisted of a sort of grating, formed of a succession of wooden bars, with interstices between them, about a third of an inch in breadth. Into this each devotee dropped one or more pieces of money as soon as the miraculous relic had touched his eyes.

I have been assured that the sum of money received annually at St. Jean du Doigt on this day is very considerable indeed. And I can easily conceive it to be so; for the confluence of people was immense, and, of course, no one there failed to come to the altar, nor could I perceive that any one left it without having deposited an offering in the box.

The crowding, pushing, struggling, and jostling, at the entrance to the passage in front of the altar, was tremendous. Here, high above the heads of the undulating crowd, mounted on a level with the top of the altar-rails, was a beadle, with a good stout cane in his hand, with which he was laying about him vigorously; wacking the most violent and impatient of the crowds over their heads and shoulders; much in the

same manner that a Smithfield drover regulates the motions of an irritated and overdriven herd of bullocks.

We remained near the altar for some time. But there was nothing more to see than we had seen. The same thing continued without the slightest variation. Fresh comers continually thronged to the door of the passage, and supplied the places of those who kept streaming from the other end, as fast as the priest could touch both their eyes with the sacred relic. And this continued nearly the whole day.

I could not perceive that any body watched, to see if the people dropped their money. The priest certainly paid no attention to it, being fully engaged in performing his own task, now stepping back a little, and now forward, and now stretching out his arm to some one behind, whom the throng prevented from getting close to the altar-rails. It appeared, indeed, that the honesty or fanaticism of the pilgrims rendered any care on this point unnecessary. For I observed many, who had had the finger applied to their eyes across others, and were consequently separated from the box on the rails, and were being carried away by the motion of the crowd, struggling hard to reach the box with

their hand, to deposit therein their offering.

This church possesses several other relics of lower rank and inferior quality to the baptist's finger. One of these, St. Meriadec's skull, I believe, was being exhibited at another altar in a different part of the church; and a similar scene was going on there on a smaller scale.

This continued without stopping till about six o'clock, at which hour the procession was to take place. This is always a leading feature in all village festivals and solemnities in Britanny; and the delight and pride the peasants take in them, and the importance they attach to them, are extraordinary. Every thing that their inventions can suggest, or their limited resources supply, is put in requisition, to give eclat and magnificence to the procession, and to eclipse, if possible, the pretensions of some neighbouring and rival commune.

It may be easily supposed that, with all their efforts, these displays of village pride and magnificence are neither very splendid nor very imposing, except in the eyes of the peasants themselves. All the young girls of the village, up to about fifteen years of age, who can muster a clean white frock — ac-

quired, probably, in many cases originally by painful sacrifices, and preserved exclusively for this purpose with jealous care—generally form the head of the procession. Next come a man with a drum and some half dozen others with a few muskets, and, if they are very splendid, with one or two white sword-belts over their shoulders. These represent the national guard of the commune, whose most important certainly, and, perhaps, only duty, in these rustic districts, it is to attend and grace such ceremonies. Next follow the village authorities—the maire and his adjoint. Then come the church banners, the crosses, the relics, and the clergy — the more the better — in their robes, sometimes bearing the "Saint Sacrement;" and the whole is closed by a long line of the faithful, walking two and two, and chanting, in a loud drawling voice, canticles in honour of the saint, whose festival they are celebrating.

But, above all, the banners of his native parish are an object of pride and reverence to a Bas-Breton peasant; and to be selected to carry them in the processions on high days and holydays is an object of his greatest ambition. But this is not an honour to be sought by all.

"Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum."

Most of these banners are exceedingly heavy. Some of them are very ancient, and the massive, brass ornamented poles, and half-effaced painting on the moth-eaten silk or velvet, attest an antiquity of at least three centuries. Those of more modern date are not much lighter, for the poles are frequently very long, and the painted silk attached to it of very considerable size. It requires, therefore, a muscular frame and a sinewy arm to carry these banners in a proper position, and with dignified decorum; and long practising, and frequent trials in private, are exacted of the candidate for this high honour, before the credit of the parish is entrusted to his keeping in public.

One great and special object of emulation and pride is, when the procession passes out of the nave of the church, to lower the banners into a horizontal position pointing forwards, so as to pass them under the arch of the doorway without touching it, or brushing the sides of it, or of the porch; and then to raise them slowly and majestically into a perpendicular position again, and all without any assistance from a second person. This, as may be easily conceived, can be done only by very great power of muscle, joined to a considerable degree of dexterity.

In this respect, as is in so many others, the ideas and feelings still preserved only among the peasants are but the relics of the universal character, which pervaded all ranks of society in the middle ages. In those days, nobles and princes were suitors for the honour of carrying the ecclesiastical treasures in the processions, which form so large a portion of the pomp of Romanism; and, in many instances in Britanny, the privilege of bearing the banners in the village ceremonies was expressly reserved as a feodal right to the lord of the manor. It is curious to find Charles de Blois, Arthur of Britanny, or Duke Peter, contending for the same distinction some hundreds of years ago, which is now as eagerly sought by the peasant descendants of their lowest subjects. Thus the world wags! Ideas change, and fashions descend from prince to peasant, like cast-off garments.

There is an extraordinary ceremony observed, when the banners of two processions from different parishes meet, either for the purpose of uniting into one, or from any other cause, which I was at a great loss to comprehend, until I found it explained in the work of M. Bouet of Brest, written for the purpose of illustrating M. Perrin's series of

plates representing Breton manners and customs.

Whenever such a meeting takes place, the rival banners are, with much parade, inclined towards each other by their respective bearers, so that the figures painted on either may touch each other. This is termed the " salutation of the banners."

The origin and intention of this salutation it seems is this. The pride of the villagers in their banners and in the splendour of their processions is—naturally, alas! — connected with a spirit of emulation and animosity against those of their neighbours. Thus, when the processions of two rival parishes met, especially if, as is likely frequently to be the case, the meeting chanced to take place in a narrow hollow way, where it was impossible to pass each other, each was unwilling to give way. It became, however, necessary that one should give place to its rival, and retrace its step. This was a degradation to which neither party were willing to submit. Each maintained the superior dignity of its own saint; and where is the Bas-Breton who would not die for the united cause of his own saint and his own obstinacy!

The holy persons, whose figures were dis-

played on the banners, were supposed to be animated with the same passions, the same zeal for their own dignity, and the same hatred for the opposition saint of the next parish, which actuated their followers. The most bitter and lasting religious feuds were thus generated. Desperate battles were fought under the banners, and for the honour of St. Yves, or St. Perec, or St. Meen. Nothing could better deserve indulgences, and protection, and favouritism from a saint, than courageous exertions on these occasions, and victory achieved for him over his enemy and rival of the next parish. Bones were broken, and lives sometimes lost, in these obstinate encounters, which never ceased till the figure of one saint was borne in triumph, amid the shouts of his followers, over the prostrate body of the other.

In order to put a stop to these battles, the priests, from time to time, pretended that such and such rival saints had declared their mutual reconciliation; and, it was publicly announced that henceforward they intended to be the best friends in the world. A solemn peace-making took place, and, whenever the friends met afterwards, they were held out to each other by their respective bearers to

kiss. Hence "The salutation of the banners."

On the present occasion, the utmost means of the parish were strained, and all its resources put in requisition, to do honour to this great festival. The task of the banner-bearers was particularly arduous; for there was a fitful squally wind, which made it exceedingly difficult to carry them steadily, and the distance they were to be borne was considerable.

The procession was to march to the spot where the materials of the bonfire were prepared, which was to be lighted that night, in honour of "Messire Saint Jean." The practice of lighting bonfires on St. John's eve was once universal throughout France, as well as in some other parts of Europe. In Britanny, the custom is still as prevalent as ever. There are many reasons for believing that the practice has descended from the times of Paganism; and many superstitions are yet received by the people with regard to it.

There are few villages or hamlets in Britanny that have not their bonfire on the eve of St. John; but of course, in the village, under his peculiar patronage, and in the presence of hundreds of pilgrims, assembled

for his express honour, the rite is solemnized with especial pomp and circumstance, and the blaze is a glorious one. At the top of a little eminence, from which you look down upon the church and village nestling around it, and may catch a peep of the sea between the hills beyond it, there is the fountain, near which, as has been related, the youth, who brought with him the Finger into Britanny, awoke from his miraculous trance. It was close to this that the bonfire was prepared.

It could hardly be expected that the waters of this fountain could flow so near a spot sanctified by such a miracle, and the presence of such a relic, without catching the contagion of sanctity. Accordingly, the fountain has ever since been deemed holy, and its waters are held to possess miraculous virtues. The pilgrims never fail to wash their eyes with it, and most of them carry away with them a bottle of it.

To this spot the solemn train proceeded. A hollow way led up the side of the hill, and in some degree compelled, by its narrowness, the immense crowd to keep behind the procession. We however climbed up the steep side of this ravine, and thus, high above the heads of the crowd, looked down upon the

assembled multitude. The coup d'œil was certainly a very striking one. The processional pomp, examined in detail, was, of course, mean and ridiculous. But the general aspect of the prodigious multitude assembled from so many distant homes, their deep seriousness, and evident devotion, as with bare heads, and long locks streaming in the wind, they raised the burthen of their solemn chant, could not fail to affect powerfully the imagination. It was excited, moreover, by the thought, that at the same hour of the same day, for several hundred years, a multitude, similar in appearance, habits, and feelings, had pursued the same path for the same purpose. And the reflection that in all probability at a period, since which empires have risen and fallen, and the prospects of the entire human race have been changed, the ancestors of these people were offering their homage to similar created objects, with ideas and notions but too slightly differing from those of their descendants, on whom we were gazing, imparted a solemn and almost awful interest to the scene.

At length the living mass reached the top of the hill, and arranged itself in a vast circle around the huge stack of dry broom and furze, which was destined to the flames. Some

fireworks were to be let off first; and when this had been done, the firing of a cannon gave the signal that the bonfire was about to be lighted. This, however, was to be accomplished in no ordinary way, but by fire from heaven, or by a contrivance intended to resemble it in effect, as nearly as might be. A long rope was attached to the top of the church tower, the other end of which communicated with the fuel. Along this a "feu d' artifice," in the form of a dove, was to be launched, which was to run along the line, and ignite the dry brushwood.

Great is the importance attached to this feat of ingenuity, and long is the sight looked forward to by the admiring peasants. Down shot the fiery dove at the sound of the cannon, and briskly she flew along the rope, amid the murmured raptures of the crowd, till she had travelled about half the distance. But there, alas! she stopped dead, nor could any expedient of shaking the rope, &c., induce her to advance another inch.

The fact was, that the rope was not stretched tightly enough to produce an uninterrupted line in an inclined plane. Its own weight caused it to form a considerable curve, and the dove decidedly refused to advance an inch up hill. Thus foiled in their scenic

effect, the masters of the ceremonies were fain to light their bonfire in an ordinary and less ambitious way.

This was soon done. The dry brushwood blazed up in an instant, and the already wide circle around the fire was soon enlarged by the heat, which drove back the thick ranks by its rapidly increasing power.

Then indeed the scene became truly picturesque, and well worthy of the pencil of a Rembrandt. Nothing can be conceived more striking than the appearance of the multitude, with their motley variety of costume, their dark, sunburnt faces, and expressive features, seen in the strongly contrasted light and shade, as the blazing pile, burning waywardly, according to the squally gusts of the wind, threw now on one side, and now on the other, the fierce brilliance of its broad, red gleam.

Soon after the pile was lighted, the clergy, with the banners, the relics, and the principal part of the procession, left the bonfire, and returned down the hill to the village. This appeared to be the signal that all semblance of a religious ceremony might now be dropped. The remainder of the evening was given up to unrestrained merry-making and carousing. The dance around the fire, which, when for-

merly it was lighted at the same period of the year, in honour of the Sun, was intended to typify the motion of the stars, and has been preserved, though meaningless, since the Christianization of the festival, was duly performed. Cattle were brought, and made to leap over the burning embers, to preserve them from disease, and from the malice of the fairies. Boys and girls rushed in, and snatched from the glowing mass a half-consumed morsel, to be carefully preserved till next St. John's eve for good-luck — shouts and cries rose on all sides from the excited multitude; and the whole scene, over which a solemn and religious spirit had so recently presided, became one of frolic and confusion.

One after another the surrounding hills were lighted up each with its crowning bonfire, and the reflections of many others still more distant were seen in the sky, imparting to the heavens in every direction the ruddy glow of a golden sunset. Then groups of girls, in their holyday trim, might be seen stealing off, and mounting the various points of the hills, to try if they could see nine fires at once. For, if they can do this, they are sure of being married in the course of the year.

The more soberly disposed and steady among the crowd were leaving the village in parties varying in number, when we started on our walk back to Morlaix. We left, however, a sufficient multitude behind us, who were apparently little disposed to bring their revelling to so early a conclusion. We did not return by the road we had come, but by Lanmeur, there falling into the "grande route" from Paris to Brest. The whole country through which we passed was illumined by a succession of fires. And on many of the hills a shadowy circle of ghost-like figures might be seen moving around the distant flames. We found no less than three bonfires blazing in different places in the very middle of the road, over which two or three diligences would have to pass in the course of a few hours.

Several fires were burning in the streets and open spaces of the town when we got to Morlaix, and lighted up, with a strange and striking effect, the picturesque old houses, and the grotesque figures and carving on their highly-ornamented fronts.

We found the inmates of the Hôtel de Paris still stirring, though it was long past the hour at which, on any other occasion, they, as well

as all others in the good town of Morlaix would have been at rest; and we both agreed that our pilgrimage to the shrine of St. John had been far from the least interesting day of our wanderings.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Walk to St. Pol de Leon—Peculiar Character of the City—Legend of St. Pol—Remarkable Privilege—Tranquillity of the Town—The Cathedral—Creisker—Roscoff—Enterprising Spirit of its Inhabitants—Smuggling—Mary Queen of Scots' Chapel—Isle de Batz—Extraordinary Fig Tree—Walk to Landiviseau—A "Cloarec"—Education of Students for Holy Orders—Templars' Church at Lambader—Arrival at Brest.

We left Morlaix, probably for ever, on the morning after our return from the pilgrimage. We turned our faces northwards, and, climbing out of the valley of the Dossen, as the sun was rising over the distant Ménéz-Arés hills, we started with the intention of reaching St. Pol de Leon before breakfast. The distance we had to traverse is five leagues over a country which presents no remarkable features. After passing over a succession of small cultivated hills, we at length mounted one from which "the holy city," as Breton writers love to term it, was visible.

Situated on the gentle slope of a hill, its

whole size was at once discovered; and the variety of spires and towers, so numerous in proportion to the houses of the little town, explained at first sight the reason and appropriateness of this appellation. In fact, St. Pol has been, from the time of its earliest foundation to the present, an ecclesiastical city. No town in Britanny has more, or more ancient, traditions and histories connected with it than St. Pol de Leon. But they are almost all of an ecclesiastical character. Its whole history resembles that of a monastery rather than of a town; and it would be, perhaps, difficult to find in Europe another city whose renown and name are so exclusively linked with ecclesiastical reminiscences. Its heroes are saints; its fortresses, monasteries and churches; its memorable achievements, miracles; and its history, their legends.

As the natural tendency of military deeds is to destroy and leave to oblivion, so that of the ecclesiastical spirit is to preserve and perpetuate. And, accordingly, at St. Pol de Leon a vast number of memorials, legends, traditions, and customs, have been handed down from the most remote antiquity. Nowhere could a richer harvest of this sort be gathered, and, if the limits of a volume were a little more elastic, much of very amusing

and curious lore might be extracted from the annals of "the holy city."

The St. Pol, or Paul, who founded it, was born in 492, in a province of "the Isle of Britain, formerly named Albion, but now England," called Penohen, and was ordained priest in 514 "by the Bishop of Guic-Kastel, which the English of the present day call Winchester." Many were the notable miracles and deeds performed by him; but I must not here be enticed into relating them. Suffice it that he impressed a character of sanctity on the town and its immediate neighbourhood which it never afterwards lost.

This worthy saint, however, was not the first apostle of this part of the country. Christianity was the religion of the district when he arrived there, having previously landed near the mouth of the Aber-Vrach, and found the inhabitants there — the ancestors of our bare-legged friends, the wreckers of the nineteenth century—pagans, extremely ferocious, and in a state of the lowest barbarism. Is it not curious to find the same clear and palpable distinction of character existing between the inhabitants of neighbouring cantons more than thirteen hundred years ago, which may still be observed as strongly marked as ever at the present day?

It is curious, too, to find a family enjoying, up to the period of the revolution, a privilege granted to their ancestor, and bearing the name given to him by this same Saint Pol at the beginning of the sixth century. This was the case with respect to the seigneurs of Kergournadech. Their ancestor, a young warrior of the parish of Cleder, near St. Pol, assisted the saint in exterminating a monster which ravaged the country; and was by him desired to call himself and his descendants after him for ever by the name of Kergournadech, which means, say the antiquaries, "the family of him who knows not to fly." The good bishop also conferred on him and his heirs for ever the privilege of coming to the altar alone, with their swords by their sides, and with gilded spurs, on the Sunday after the Octave of St. Peter and St. Paul, which is the anniversary of the dedication of the cathedral of St. Pol; and of sitting on that day during the service in the bishop's own seat in the cathedral. And there is still living in the town of Landerneau, or was very lately, an old man, a lawyer, who had himself exercised this right on behalf of M. de la Granville, seigneur de Kergournadech.

We found a tolerable inn in the "place" of the town, where we obtained two excellent

beds in an enormous old-fashioned unceiled room, and, after a good breakfast, we sallied forth to look at the town.

Many towns throughout France suffered severely from the revolution, and some were much longer than others in recovering from the blow. But France has been for some years rapidly rising in physical prosperity, and most of her cities are, at the least, in as flourishing a state as they were before that epoch. But this is not the case with St. Pol de Leon. To this exclusively ecclesiastical city the revolution was all but a death-blow. In taking from it its bishop, its chapter, and its monasteries, which have never been restored, it deprived it of its only source of importance and prosperity, and almost of life. It is still the dwelling-place of a considerable number of priests; and its only other inhabitants are a few quiet vegetating "rentiers," and the few tradespeople, who supply their simple wants. Grass grows in the streets, and although the day of our arrival was that of the weekly market, the "grande place" was as quiet as a village churchyard. The general air of the place might impress a traveller with the notion that all the inhabitants were asleep. A deep and slumbering tranquillity seems to be the presiding genius of the town,

and the poet's hermit, had he wandered hither, might have well exclaimed—

> "If there's peace to be found in the world,
> The heart that is weary might hope for it here."

The principal building of the town is of course the ci-devant cathedral. It is small, low, and gloomy. No service was going on there when we entered. Two or three silent figures were kneeling motionless in different parts of the nave, and not a sound but the echo of our own footsteps disturbed the death-like stillness of the sombre place. But the quiet was hardly more profound than that of the city without; and the deep silence, the dingy walls, and the undisturbed dust on them, seemed attributes fitting a place of worship for this scarcely living city.

The organ presently began to sound, and we remained for some time enjoying the cool solitariness, and listening to a number of airs which were played in succession by the invisible musician. We were told afterwards at the inn, that it was a young man of the town who had "un grand talent pour la musique," and that the priests permitted him to amuse and improve himself by making use of the cathedral organ.

Though ecclesiastically first, the cathedral

is not, in an architectural point of view, the most important church in St. Pol de Leon. There exists at no great distance from it a small edifice, called Creisker, a word which signifies the middle of the town. This building is celebrated and loudly vaunted throughout Britanny for the beauty of its tower; and truly it not only merits all that is said of it, but well deserves a far more extended reputation.

A small chapel had occupied this spot from a remote antiquity, and was in a ruinous state towards the end of the fourteenth century, when Duke John the Fourth rebuilt it, or rather built on the site of it the pretty church and magnificent steeple, which has ever since been the pride and admiration of the whole province. It is three hundred and seventy feet (French) in height, and, I think, of lighter and more elegant proportions than any other tower I know. The celebrated Vauban, when he visited Britanny, in 1671, for the purpose of inspecting the ports, said that it was the boldest construction he had ever seen. From the top of the tower rises a light and ornamented spire, flanked by four extremely slender and graceful smaller ones, shooting up from the four corners of it. The date above assigned to this splendid work—

the latter part of the fourteenth century—sufficiently declares that its era was that of the purest taste and most elegant forms of gothic art.

I mounted to the top of it, and examined, with interest and wonder, in every part, the marvellous airy lightness of effect, the daring hardihood of the grand conception, and the admirable skill and science which alone could have succeeded in executing so magnificently bold a design. The view from the summit is, of course, extensive; but, with the exception of the seaward prospect and the line of coast, is neither beautiful nor remarkable.

On the second day of our stay at St. Pol de Leon, we walked, before breakfast, to Roscoff, a little town and port, situated at the end of a promontory, or tongue of land, about two leagues to the north of St. Pol. It is an active and commercial little place in a small way, and presents a striking contrast to its more stately and profoundly tranquil neighbour.

The whole of the land in the environs of Roscoff is cultivated as garden ground, being particularly favourable for the growth of onions and artichokes, of which we saw whole fields, bearing thick crops of them in the greatest perfection. The active and enter-

prising Roscovites transport these — each man travelling with the produce of his own field, or, perhaps, two or three proprietors of small patches uniting to send one of their number—to Rennes, in light carts, drawn by one or two of their little horses. I was told that, last year, some still more aspiring had travelled with the produce of their fields to Paris, and had realised a very handsome profit by the adventure.

An important, perhaps the most important, part of the trade of Roscoff consists in dealings with English smugglers; and the staple article of this commerce is brandy. I was told that a "piece," as it is termed, of the best brandy, consisting of four hundred bottles, may be purchased at Bordeaux for two hundred and fifty francs. It may be imagined, therefore, how great a profit this trade must afford, and how much risk the dealers can well venture to encounter. I was shewn a large building, which, they said, was the head-quarters of the contraband trade; and in which there were also a very considerable number of tubs of brandy constantly ready to be shipped at a moment's notice. The advantage of this trade is entirely with the French; for the smuggling

boats do not bring over any cargo with them to France.

A little chapel was pointed out to me near the beach, now desecrated, and used as a barn, which the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots founded, according to her vow, when, storm-driven, she landed at Roscoff.

Near this spot is the ferry across the narrow strait which divides the little isle of Batz from the main land. The time occupied by the passage is only ten minutes, and yet the degree of isolation and seclusion in which the inhabitants live is extraordinary. The isle is a miserable, inclement, storm-swept spot; and the islanders gather but a meagre subsistence in return for most assiduous and unremitting toil. Yet they love their harsh and unkindly home, and can by no means be prevailed on to quit it and settle on the main land. They look, too, with a jealous eye on any stranger who comes among them; and, in all respects, appear anxious to perpetuate that separation from the people of the main land, which should seem to be the hardest circumstance in their rigorous and severe destiny.

One very remarkable peculiarity of their character is said to be a total freedom from all the superstitious belief in fairies, ghosts,

and evil influences of all sorts, which occupies so large a portion of the thoughts of their neighbours on the main land. This is the more remarkable, in that it is exactly the reverse of what might have been expected from one's general course of observation of what usually happens in similar positions.

The grand lion of Roscoff, which we were told we must visit before we walked back to St. Pol, is an enormous fig-tree. It is situated in the garden of the ci-devant convent of Cordeliers, and is, in truth, worth seeing. The trunk is not particularly large; but the circumference of the circle overshadowed by its boughs is sixty-seven paces! There are sixty stout pieces of timber to prop up the immense mass of intertwined branches. The yearly produce is very large; and every year it is cut, to prevent it spreading over the whole garden. The monk who planted this tree is said to be still alive in Portugal. A Roscovite captain of a trading vessel saw him there a few years ago. The poor monk had left behind him none of those objects of affection which bind the hearts of most men to their native place and home of many years. But he asked with exceeding interest after his fig-tree, and wept for joy when he heard of

the wonderful degree in which it had thriven and increased.

We spent the remainder of the day, after our return to St. Pol, in rambling about in the environs. But the country is not of an interesting description. The next morning we left "the holy city," and directed our steps southwards towards Landivisieau, where we should fall into the great road, and whence we purposed proceeding to Brest by diligence.

We did not quit St. Pol de Leon for ever, without turning round over and over again, as we traversed the undulating country in its neighbourhood, to look on the superb tower of Creisker. It was while pausing for this purpose on the top of the last hill from which we should be able to see it, that we were overtaken by a young man, whose face and manner, not less than his shorn locks, proclaimed him to be a "cloarec," as the young students for holy orders are termed in Britanny. Observing that we were gazing at the tower, he paused too, and, after a moment apparently of hesitation, he addressed us, remarking that there were few such towers as that in the world. We readily agreed with him; and, thus encouraged, he turned round to walk on when we turned,

and was easily led to tell us a variety of the legends which relate to the life of St. Pol, and the subsequent fortunes of the church founded by him.

I was delighted with the naïve and simple good faith with which he related the most monstrous miracles—the utter absence of any doubt of the truth of what he was telling in his own mind—and the total freedom from all suspicion that his hearers might not implicitly believe his tales. I have already said, I believe, in a former chapter, that the clergy in Britanny are almost invariably supplied from the class of the peasants; and it was curious to observe how little the professional studies this youth had gone through had contributed to the general opening of his mind; how entirely his notions and feelings were still those of a peasant, unchanged by the addition of those ecclesiastical sentiments and ideas which had been engrafted on them in the course of his seminary career.

But his manner was sensibly changed. Instead of the bold and free, though courteous, salutation, and self-possessed demeanour, which would have characterized the address of another young peasant, his tone was subdued, quiet, and almost melancholy. Nor is it extraordinary that the frame of

mind, which this indicates, should be the result of his seclusion from the scenes and companions of his boyhood, and the painful continuance of self-denial that is imposed upon him during the period of his education.

It is the greatest object of a peasant's pride to bring up a son for the church; and, doubtless, the ambition of the young priest himself has ample—far too ample—means of gratification. He is looked upon by those who were his fellows as something not only of a superior order, but almost of a superior nature to themselves. Among them each village priest is regarded, in truth and in deed, as God's vicegerent upon earth, and his power and influence is ordinarily commensurate with such ideas. When the young peasant has once received the apostolical benediction, he may return to his father's house; but he returns no more as a son to his parents. His father uncovers his grey hairs and stands before him, his brothers submissively beg his blessing, and his mother serves him at a table apart from the rest of the family.

All this is far from wholesome for the human mind; and it can hardly be but that to some hearts this isolation from all social sympathies, this severing of all the close-drawn bonds of affection, must strike chill and deadly.

But supposing that the ungenial pride of a cold heart, and the perverted ambition of a warped mind, are powerful enough to make these testimonies of reverence more acceptable to the object of them than the warm manifestations of natural love, still the noviciate through which the peasant must pass, before he attains the ambitioned honour of the priesthood, must be a painful one, full of self-denial, hardship, and struggles.

The studies which are to fit the destined priest for his profession do not in general commence till he is seventeen or eighteen. He is allowed to remain at large in the world long enough to acquire the unconfined open-air habits of a peasant, a love for his native fields, and perhaps to have formed an attachment which he is called on to abandon and forget for ever, precisely at that period of life when the passions are least subject to the control of the judgment. He is suddenly snatched from all that he has learned to love; his flowing hair, the especial ornament and pride of manhood among the Celtic peasants, is cut; and, thus marked in person, as one set apart and severed from the herd, he is, at an age when unwonted study is most irksome, fixed down to distasteful labours in a wretched garret of the much-hated town.

But this is not all. His studies are to be pursued under every disadvantage. "Sa famille," writes M. Souvestre, describing the life of a cloarec, "que le vaniteux espoir de faire un prêtre pousse à tous les sacrifices, ne peut cependant subvenir toujours à toutes ses dépenses. Les objets les plus nécessaires, le papier, les plumes, les livres, lui manquent parfois. Dans ce cas, le cloarec devient ingénieux pour suppléer aux ressources, qui lui sont refusées. Il obtient les vieux cahiers de ses camarades, et écrit dans les interlignes. Il ramasse hors des classes les plumes que le portier a balayées; il copie à la main les ouvrages classiques et son manuscrit lui tient lieu de livre."

It frequently happens that the bare means of subsistence is all that his friends are able to supply him with; and even that is often done with difficulty. "Chaque jour de marché le père ou la mère se rendent à la ville, et apportent à l'écolier un pain noir, du beurre, du lard, quelques galettes, et des pommes de terre. Ces provisions doivent durer jusqu'au marché suivant, où elles sont renouvelées."

It will be seen that the much coveted honours of the cassock and stole are not purchased by the young cloarecs at any trifling expense of hardship and endurance; and I

could not help thinking that I read a striking commentary on all this history, in the features and demeanour of our young comrade from St. Pol to Landivisieau. He accompanied us most part of the way thither, and I was by no means weary of his company.

We passed, about two leagues before coming to the end of our walk, the village of Lambader, where the Templars had a commandery. Souvestre speaks of the painted windows of this church—but there are none there. To make amends for the absence of it, there is a screen of carved wood, more delicately sculptured, I think, than any I ever before saw. High on the wall above the choir are hung a pair of fetters—doubtless a memorial of the captivity and deliverance of some bold soldier of the Temple in the Holy Land.

We reached Landiviseiau in time to proceed to Brest, as we had intended, by the Paris diligence. We passed on the road a large caravan, guarded by three or four gendarmes, which I was told was conveying prisoners to the Bagne at Brest. This mode of transporting them across the country has been recently adopted, instead of marching them thither in irons, and is evidently on many accounts an improvement on the old system.

We arrived at Brest in time to seek, and after some little difficulty obtain, a private lodging, which, as we intended to remain some short time there, we judged both more comfortable and more economical than remaining at an hotel.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Brest—Its Sources of Interest—Not a Breton Town—Recouvrance —Galley Slaves—Walk to St. Renan—Ancient Wardrobe—Menhir of Plouarzel — Anecdotes of the Early Progress of Christianity in Britanny — Remnants of Paganism — Superstitions — Drunkenness of the Bretons — Misletoe — Strawberries of Plougastel—Walk to Le Conquet—Decay of this town—Walk to Cap. St. Mathieu—Storm—Ruins of the Monastery of St. Matthew—Lighthouse—View from it—A Wetting—Moonlight Walk—Return to Brest.

Brest is on many accounts a very interesting town. It is, perhaps, especially so to an English traveller. Its dockyard, its arsenal, its ships, its gigantic prisons with their inmates, and prison discipline, its roadstead, one of the finest in the world, its chateau, its forts, and fortifications, its mixed naval and military society, and its historical reminiscences, are all subjects of extreme interest, and well merit to be visited. An amusing and useful volume might well be written on Brest and its various establishments. But,

except by geographical position, Brest is no part of Britanny. All those remarkable peculiarities of manner, habits, and appearance, which so characteristically distinguish the other towns of Lower Britanny, have here, as may easily be imagined, been effaced by those peculiar to it as the first military port of France. It has become, what no other part of Lower Britanny has yet been rendered, really and entirely French; and Breton customs and characteristics would be sought there with about as much success as those of Spain among the inhabitants of the rock of Gibraltar.

I shall not, therefore, occupy much of the too rapidly decreasing space which is left me, in describing at length all that we saw and did during the week we remained at Brest. Suffice it to those, who may find themselves within reach of it, to be told that they may spend as many days there profitably and agreeably — that the "rade" is one of the best places possible for sailing expeditions, and that its rocky and fort-guarded coast offers a great variety of points, interesting both from their local peculiarities and historical reminiscences — that delightful excursions may be made to the "Point d'Espagnol," to the "Lignes de Quelern," to

Camaret, or to the grottoes of Morgatte, in the peninsula of Crozon—and that, for their delectation within the town, there is the "Cours d' Ajot," the most magnificent town promenade probably in the world. It was constructed on that part of the fortifications which overlook the roadstead by M. d' Ajot, director of the fortifications of Brest, in 1769. The fine mass of its noble trees, blending as they do with the grey battlements and the towers of the chateau, make it as noble an object from the water, as the view of the roadstead and its shores from it is grand and unrivalled.

We were indebted not only for every facility in seeing the public works, which kindness, backed by most efficient official interest, could suggest, but also for the unrestricted use of a good boat and boat's crew in visiting every part of the roadstead, to the hospitable courtesy of a gentleman to whom we had letters of introduction. Nor can I undertake to say that all parts of the royal arsenal would be equally accessible to strangers, unprovided with such recommendations.

Brest may also be made the centre of several interesting excursions inland. And, as immediately on passing the gates of the town, the true Breton characteristics are again re-

cognized, some of these must be spoken of a little less summarily.

The district to the north-west of Brest, which is bounded by the river Aber-benoit, the roadstead of Brest, and the coast, consisting of the cantons of St. Renan, Ploudalmezeau, and Plabennec, is rich in Druidical remains; and our first landward excursion from the town was to visit the Menhir of Plouarzel—the highest and most magnificent in Britanny.

We left our lodgings in the "Rue de la Rampe" soon after five o'clock, and, descending to the port, crossed over to that fauxbourg of the town, called "La Recouvrance," in one of the hundred ferry-boats, some of which ply here at all hours, and constitute the only communication between the two parts of the town. It is impossible to conceive a more bustling and animated scene than this spot presents during the more busy hours of the day. But now the greater part of the boats were moored to the quay side; and three or four only of the most industrious were earning a few liards by passing here and there an early labourer to his work.

On the opposite bank we saw a gang of galley-slaves coupled by handcuffs two and two, and connected all together by a long

chain, passing down between the couples, being marched to their daily labour in some part of the port. Surely the habit of seeing these men, degraded by fetters, and marked by a dress peculiar to themselves, and known as a badge of infamy, labouring at various employments in the port, and injuring, as they must to a very considerable degree, the market value of free labour, must have a pernicious effect upon the artizans and labourers of the town.

Climbing the steep street which leads from the water side on the Recouvrance shore of the river to the top of the hill, we soon passed the outward fortifications of the town, and had a pleasant, though in no wise remarkable walk to St. Renan, a little "chef lieu de canton," about three leagues from Brest.

We got there a very good breakfast in an ancient-looking house, with an ancient-looking mistress, who showed us, in her own bed-room, a most ancient-looking clothes-press—the great pride and glory of her house. It was of oak, as black as jet, and one of the most beautiful specimens of carving I ever saw. She told us it was made two hundred years ago, and cost fifteen hundred francs, though the men who worked at it received only eight sous a day. I saw throughout the

country in houses of every description an immense quantity of old oak furniture ; but they appear to have left off manufacturing it of that wood entirely. All the modern furniture is made almost invariably of ash.

When we had breakfasted, and admired her press to the old lady's heart's content, we started in search of the celebrated Menhir. The village of Plouarzel is about half-way between St. Renan and the sea-c[illegible]t on the west; and the stone in question is about a league perhaps from the latter. The traveller need only follow the road to Plouarzel, till he sees the object of his search. There is no chance of missing it. He will see its huge mass towering on the top of a hill long before he reaches it.

If the ancient priests who planted this everlasting memorial of their power s[illegible] the place on which it is erect[illegible] with [illegible] to produce a striking and impressive effect, they could not have fixed on a better spot. Reared on the summit of a high barren moor, the whole of its vast bulk is seen against the sky in that unbroken isolation of position, which always adds so much to the apparent size of an object so seen. For a single mass of stone, its real height is enormous — forty French feet. It serves as a landmark many



Drawn and Etched by A. Hervieu

MÉNHIR, NEAR BREST

Pub. by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough Street 1840

a league at sea, and may even be descried occasionally by the naked eye when the state of the atmosphere is favourable from the ramparts of Brest.

There can be little doubt that this stupendous stone, like most of the larger menhirs, was raised as an emblem of the Deity. It is to the present day regarded with the utmost reverence and dread by the peasants, who would by no means pass it without making the sign of the cross and uncovering the head. But the feeling which inspires the deep awe, approaching to fear, with which the people look on these monuments, is not caused by the cross with which so many of them are surmounted, but to a traditional veneration for the stone itself. The hat might be doffed and the holy sign be made, in passing any of the numerous crosses which have been originally raised for Christian purposes, but the feeling in the mind of the peasant would be very different. He attaches to the stone a variety of definite superstitious ideas and practices; but neither is this the cause of that deep-seated sensation of awe which they produce. For similar superstitions prevail with regard to many objects, which do not inspire the same feeling.

The peasant, himself, probably would be at

a loss to explain even to his own mind the reason or the precise nature of the sentiments which fill his imagination with regard to these monuments. The existence of these shadowy yet tenacious ideas in the minds of this people is a very remarkable instance of the degree to which feelings once profoundly impressed on the character of a nation may remain, and continue to influence them for many many generations, after the intelligible ideas which originally gave rise to those feelings have ceased to exist. To any inquiries on the subject, a peasant, if he could be persuaded, which is very doubtful, to speak on the awful topic at all, would, in all probability, answer that his father and grandfather had reverenced that stone; and the reply would be to himself perfectly satisfactory and sufficient. If a new menhir were to be raised, the people would regard it with no sort of feelings differing from those with which they would look on any other stone.

The ecclesiastical history of Britanny frequently bears testimony to the great obstacle which these stones were in the way of the introduction of the new faith. A council held at Nantes, in the year 658, among its canons, against the idolatrous practices of the people, has one which speaks of "certain

oaks and stones hidden in the profound recesses of the forests, before which the people burn fires, and place offerings." The Armorican bishops are strictly commanded by this council to cause the trees which were worshipped to be torn up and burned, and the stones to be thrown down and hidden in places where the peasants could not find them.

It is clear that these orders were very imperfectly executed, not because the bishops of Armorica had any favour for idolatry, but because it was a vast deal easier to issue such commands than to put them into execution. Towards the end of the eighth century, we find Charlemagne reprobating the same idolatrous practices in more than one of his capitularies. And the more local histories of the province speak of various endeavours of the bishops of the different dioceses to put an end to the same still lingering abominations. Even in comparatively modern times, Paganism was far from being entirely banished from the country. "On sait," writes M. de Freminville, "qu'au dix-septième siècle même, l'idolâtrie était encore exercée dans l'île d'Ouessant, et dans plusieurs paroisses de l'évêché de Vannes."

The superstitious beliefs and practices still

remaining with reference to these stones are various. To some of them cattle are brought to be cured of maladies or preserved from them. Many are believed to turn themselves round at midnight at certain seasons of the year. May not this notion be tracaeble to some of the astronomical doctrines and allegories of the Druids?

With regard to the menhir of Plouarzel, a very singular idea prevails, which gives rise to as extraordinary and ridiculous a practice. It is confidently believed by the peasants throughout the country, that this stone has the power of rendering the sterile womb fruitful. The mode by which the virtue works, and by which the hoped-for blessing must be sought, is by contact. And frequently may the "paysannes" be seen to approach the spot, with full and undoubting faith, and proceed to rub their naked bosoms against the wonder-working stone.

There are in different parts of the country several fountains to which similar and other marvellous qualities are attributed. Many of these are situated in villages where Pardons are held; and on those days, in the midst of the crowd, women may be seen rushing to the fountain, and exposing their persons in the most extraordinary manner, in order to

pour the water over every part of them. Nor have the performers of this ridiculous ceremony, or the numerous spectators of it, male and female, the least idea of any thing indecent having been done. On the contrary, the absurd scene is watched by the crowd with the utmost gravity and decorum, and most perfect faith in the efficacy of it for bringing about the desired result. I heard an instance of a young Frenchman having been severely beaten, to such a degree indeed that he narrowly escaped with his life, by the peasants, whose rage he had excited by having laughed at a scene of this sort. This anecdote was told me, however, by the sufferer himself, and I think that it is very possible that his conduct may have been more offensive to the good peasants than he represented it to me.

We remained for some time on the wild "lande," on which this menhir stands; and while my companion made a sketch of it, I amused myself by giving the reins to my imagination, and endeavouring to picture to my mind's eye the prostrate multitude of Celtic barbarians, who had covered the wide extent of this bleak moor, in the belief that the inert, but stupendous mass, which has stood through so many subsequent changes

and revolutions, was their God. I thought of the long succession of wars and destructions which human passions have so often caused to sweep over this land, wiping out from the face of the soil the traces of man's handiwork and industry—dwellings, temples, cultivation; while these, the earliest monuments of the land's first possessors, have alone remained unscathed and unchanged; and will, in all probability, still commemorate the race who raised them, when the works of our ancestors, ourselves, and our descendants, shall have perished. And, as these reflections amused my fancy, I could not help thinking that there was something magnificent and sublime in the barbaric notion of raising a monument of a single stone, which should command respect and admiration by its one attribute of stupendous size, so vast as to force upon the mind of the beholder a wondering conviction of the power and might of those who reared it; and which should carry their memorial to the end of time by its brute solidity, and the impassible immutability emulating the works of Nature's own hand.

We returned to St. Renan in good time to start on our walk back to Brest. At no great distance from the former town, we passed a miserable road-side "cabaret," indicated to be

such, as usual, by the bunch of misletoe hanging over the door, from which had just issued an elderly man and woman, both so drunk as to be hardly able to walk. It was a disgusting spectacle, and one which it would have served no purpose to record, but that it presented a fair and not extraordinary specimen of the vice, which must be the principal means of preventing Britanny from advancing to a level with other nations in civilization. It is the besetting national sin, and is carried to a length greater, I think, than is known among any large class of our population, who bear, alas! too justly, the reputation of being more given to intemperance than most of the other nations of Europe.

A Breton can rarely be said to be "overtaken by liquor;" for he almost invariably enters upon a drinking bout with the full intention and purpose of getting drunk. It is the only enjoyment he knows; and the only temptation which induces him to swerve from the rigid economy which regulates his usual mode of life. It is the vice not of any particular age, profession, or sex, but of the nation. A fond father teaches his child to get drunk; and does so himself, in company with his wife and family.

The first lesson in drunkenness usually ac-

companies the first donning of the manly "bragon-bras." The father or elder brothers make it a point to celebrate this auspicious event by plying the child with brandy till it drops senseless. Sometimes a whole cart-load of human beings, consisting of one entire family, old men, young men, women, and children, father, mother, sons and daughters, may be seen returning from the town dead drunk together; having been there for the express purpose of becoming so, fixed beforehand, and determined on, and looked forward to as a party of pleasure. I never have myself seen such a party as is here described; but I make the statement on the authority of M. Souvestre, who, in his notes to Cambry, asserts that he has; and much that I have seen leads me to believe that his picture is not exaggerated.

It is odd that the sacred plant, the misletoe, should be selected as the sign of the scenes of such excesses. For the name by which it is known among the peasants seems to indicate that the old idea of its sanctity has not been lost, though, as in so many other cases, it has been connected with a new object. They call it "touzou ar groas," the herb of the cross—an appellation which, no doubt, was given by the early teachers of Christianity, with a view

to transfer the veneration paid to it to the cross, which they very probably decked with boughs of it.

We dined at St. Renan; and, at our return to Brest, at about seven o'clock, we feasted on the strawberries for which the village of Plougastel, on the opposite side of the roadstead, is so famous. We saw whole fields there loaded with the fragrant crop; and the quantity produced is immense. They are brought over to Brest by boat-loads, and are sold at a price which must enable almost every one to eat them ad libitum.

On the next day but one after our walk to St. Renan, we set forth again, and left the town by the same gate. But, instead of turning northwards as before, we continued along the coast of the "rade" in a western direction. Our intention was to visit the ruins of St. Matthew's abbey, which is situated at the extremest point of the coast to the westward. Our walk was a more varied one than that to St. Renan. The inland country has no beauty, but we, every here and there, caught delightful views of the magnificent roadstead, whose varied shores, now low-shelving and cultivated, and now rising into bold rocky fort-crowned promontories, are highly picturesque.

We walked first to the little town of Le Conquet to breakfast. This now insignificant place was large and flourishing at a period when Brest was a poor village. The principal source of its wealth and thriving condition was the catching, drying, and salting, of all those various fish, whose consumption has, since the discovery of Newfoundland, been replaced by that of the cod-fish. This discovery, which was the making of so many towns, was the marring of Le Conquet; and since that time it has been gradually decreasing in size and importance.

It was surprised, and almost utterly destroyed by the English in the year 1597; and the few houses which then escaped may easily now be distinguished, by the style of their architecture, from those which were rebuilt after that calamity.

The walk from Le Conquet to St. Matthew's Point is a very fine one, especially on such a day as that on which we traversed the distance. It lies close along the top of the cliffs, which are here very bold; and so strong a wind, that we could with difficulty make way, or sometimes even stand against it, was driving the waves against the rocks with such fury, that we were entirely wetted with

the spray, though far above the level of the sea.

The situation of the ruins of St. Matthew's abbey is extremely imposing. The bold, bleak promontory on which they stand is the most western spot of France, and, with the exception of Cape Finisterre in Spain, of the European continent also. Standing out into the ocean from the face of this rocky coast, it encounters the full force of the heavy swell, which rolls there whenever there is the least wind; and the monastery, whose site was chosen with far different motives from those which usually guided the wealthy communities of later times in the selection of their abodes, was exposed to the unmitigated violence of the tempestuous winds to which this coast is so subject.

It was founded in the beginning of the seventh century by St. Tanguy, a Breton hermit, and was afterwards increased and enriched by the donations of various benefactors. But the monastery was from its situation exposed to other and more dangerous enemies than wind and weather. Placed on an elevated point, exactly at the entrance of the bay of Brest, the abbey of St. Matthew was too important a point to be neglected in the various wars in which France

was engaged. And the English surprised and ravaged it more than once.

No part of the present ruins appear to be anterior to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, with the exception of the west front. This is probably of the tenth or eleventh century, and reminded me, by the style of its architecture, of some of the ecclesiastical buildings of Normandy. The wind howled fearfully among the arches and pillars of the nave and aisles as we entered into the desecrated enclosure, and we were glad to avail ourselves of the shelter the old walls afforded us from the tempest for a few minutes, while we took breath and prepared to face it again.

A lighthouse has lately been built close to the ruins of the abbey. It has been long wanted here; for the whole coast is notoriously dangerous, and the "Chenal de Four," as the passage between the mainland and the numerous islands is called, is especially so. We betook ourselves to the guardian of the lighthouse, and, having obtained leave from him to mount to the top of it, we forthwith proceeded to do so, despite of the wind and the sleet, which had now begun to beat violently across the naked summit of the promontory. When we reached the top, and the door, by

which we passed from the inside of the tower to the gallery which circled the exterior, was unbarred and opened by the united strength of the guide and ourselves, it was as much as I could do to get out at all, or to stand there even when holding on to the stout iron balustrade. The guide preferred the shelter of the inside, and my companion would not even attempt to face it.

There is, on a clear day, a very fine seaward view from the top of the lighthouse, on the "Pointe St. Mathieu." To the right are the tremendous rocks of the redoubted "Chenal du Four," with the numerous granitic isles, which, in all probability, at some remote period, formed a part of the main land, Béniguet, Quemenés, Molène, and Balanec; and beyond these the more distant and larger Ouessant, the "Ultima Thule," as there is good reason to believe, of the ancient world. To the left, the eye wanders on from headland to headland, of the varied and deeply indented coast of the peninsula of Crozon, till it rests at last on the far distant promontory of the dreaded Pointe du Raz, and the storied Isle de Sein.

Of all this near and distant view, nothing was to be seen on the day of our visit to Cap St. Mathieu. The utmost range of the eye

was confined by the thick sleet and mist to the ruins of the Abbey and the hamlet immediately beneath us, and the boiling and roaring surf, close under the cliffs. I am not sure that the loss of the wider prospect was not amply compensated by the exciting and characteristic tumult of the scene to which our view was limited. It seemed as if storm and hurricane was the state of the elements most congenial to these remote and rugged rocks — the drear and fable-stored extremity of the ancient world, and to the tales of wreck and danger, with which their modern reputation is connected.

The stern old ruins, too, of the roofless Abbey, whose massive walls have defied the tempest in its utmost wrath for so many a winter, as seen vaguely and mistily through the cloudy sleet that swept over it, represented more vividly to the imagination than the same scene on a brighter day could have done, the sort of life those hardy cenobites must have lived, who chose this storm-beat headland for their dwelling-place. Fancy pleased herself with conjuring up the times when the chant of the sacred offices and the majestic swell of the organ had often mingled with the more potent voice of the tempest, and monastic robes had fluttered in the boisterous wind,

which was now careering through the desolate aisles, and shouting amid the pillars and arches of the building, as if in exultation over a destruction which its own power had not been able to effect

I was thoroughly wet through, and my companion's patience was utterly exhausted before I could prevail on myself to quit the gallery, and descend the shaft of the lighthouse. His caution, however, in remaining within the shelter of the building availed him but little. For the storm increased rather than abated; and by the time we had walked back along the edge of the cliff to Le Conquet, he was as wet as I.

We had intended to return to Brest that same day; and were, therefore, totally unprovided with any change of clothes whatever. This was not pleasant. But the kind landlady of "La Grace de Dieu,"—for that was the appellation of our inn—did all that she could for us. A blazing fire was lighted in one room, by which our upper garments were hung to dry, while our own persons were kept revolving, and imbibing copious portions of hot brandy and water before a pile of faggots in another, and some dinner was being prepared in the kitchen. Nothing, in short, was neglected which could

assist in effacing the disagreeable results of getting wet through, and having nothing to change.

The rain ceased in the evening, but too late for us to think of starting for Brest. So we made up our minds to sleep where we were, and availed ourselves of the cessation of the storm, to take another walk along the top of the cliffs, and enjoy the noise, and the sparkling of the white crests of the waves in the darkness, as they broke in foam at the foot of the rocks. The lights, both on St. Mathieu's Point, and on the far shore of Ouessant, were visible; and I enjoyed my night walk not less than I had done that of the morning.

The next day we walked back to Brest, and reached it about noon. It was the last we intended to pass there. We paid a farewell visit to the obliging friend, whose kindness had done so much to make Brest agreeable to us; then, having dined and performed the short packing which our small baggage required, we spent a pleasant hour in hearing the band play on the "champ de bataille," as the open space is called, which makes the favourite promenade of the town, took a last turn on the superb "Cours d'Ajot," and a last look at the magnificent roadstead, as the twi-

light faded, and the retreat was beating, and then went early to bed, that we might be ready to march out of Brest with the first light of the morning.

CHAPTER XL.

Walk to Landerneau—Valley of the Elorn—Chateau de Roche Morice—View from it—Its Ruins—Reliquary in the Churchyard—La Joyeuse Garde—Legend—Fête Dieu at Landerneau—Walk to Daoulas—Origin of this Name—Ruins of the Monastery at Daoulas—Quarries of Kersanton—Wolves—Walk to Chateaulin—Pretty Scenery—The Breton Switzerland—Arrival at Quimper.

WE left Brest as the carts of vegetables, and various other supplies for the daily wants of a large town, were entering it. There were several of these assembled outside the gate of the town, among which the officers of the Octroi were busy with their long iron probes, ascertaining that no article of greater value was concealed beneath cabbages or potatoes, and collecting the dues arising from this most invidious of all possible taxes. As we cleared the long, straggling fauxbourg, and mounted the gradual hill to the pretty village of Guipavaz, the air rapidly became fresher and sweeter than it had been within the walls of the town, and every sight and

sound contributed to enhance the pleasurable sensations peculiar in the country to those morning hours, which wear so cheerless and wan an aspect within the streets of cities.

We reached Landerneau a little after seven, and took up our quarters at the "Hôtel de l'Univers," a good inn, as inns go in Britanny.

After breakfast we went to see the ruins of the chateau of La Roche Morice, a little village about a league from Landerneau, on the road from Morlaix. We had passed it on our way to Brest in the diligence, and had just seen enough of it then to feel sure that, in a picturesque point of view, it deserved a visit. It is, moreover, a place of some historical interest. For, from the date of its foundation by Morvan, king of Leon and Cornouaille, who died in 819, up to the union, or réunion, as the French most absurdly insist upon calling it, of Britanny with France, it was the feodal capital of the "Vicomté de Leon."

Instead of walking thither along the high-road, we determined to find our way, if possible, along the banks of the river Elorn, which is crossed by the road at Roche Morice, and, running thence to Landerneau, falls

into the bay of Brest a few miles below that town. We found this not altogether so easy as the soft and pretty appearance of the valley made it at first sight appear. Hedges and ditches, and impediments of that kind, we had expected, and did not mind; but every here and there the valley was very marshy, and we did not win through it, as the expressive Scotch phrase says, without getting well wet, and very nearly stuck fast in the boggy soil.

The prettiness of our walk made amends for these inconveniences. The first part of the valley was smiling, verdant, and well wooded; and, as we approached the object of our walk, the scenery became bolder and more romantic. The gently sloping green hills were changed for steep, abrupt banks of considerable height, whose tops and sides, as far as the broken and craggy nature of the soil will permit, are covered with stunted, brown-looking copse-wood.

Close to the point where the road crosses the stream over an ancient bridge, an isolated, conical hill, whose upper part is little more than a bare crag, rises to an elevation considerably above that of the other rocky eminences which bound the narrow valley of the

Elorn. On the highest point of this crag, completing the conical appearance of the hill, are the ruins of the once impregnable castle of "Roche Morvan," as the village is still called in Breton.

The view from the walls of the old fortress is charming. The whole of the valley, with the windings of the pretty Elorn, as far as Landerneau, the towers of the town, the forest beyond it, and, in the farthest distance, the sparkle of the waves in the bay of Brest, just seen here and there, as they were touched by the rays of the sun, all lay in brightness and in verdure beneath the eye, and formed a landscape which, though not transferable to canvas, was, when seen in Nature's own painting, a very fascinating one.

There are a few still uneffaced traces of ruins on the sides of the hill, which shew that the more considerable remains, which crown the top of the rock, did not constitute the entire castle, but formed only the donjon, or place of last resort; and were surrounded by lower and more extensive buildings. These have all but utterly perished; and the longer enduring remains of the stronger keep are mere ragged, almost formless ruins, more useful to the sketcher, to whom their ivy-

covered masses and bold position make them a treasure, than to the scientific antiquary.

Three towers, however, may still be seen. The principal tower of the keep, which retains its proud place on the highest point of the rock, is the most perfect. It is still possible to mount to the top of its massive masonry by the broken stair, which was constructed in the thickness of the wall. This staircase formerly extended downwards into some subterraneous dungeons, excavated out of the living rock. Near this tower was a smaller triangular one, hanging most threateningly over the sheer precipitous face of the rock. The third is at some little distance, on a lower level, and must have probably formed part of the exterior buildings of the castle.

The church of the little village is situated on a lower part of the same hill; and its elegant spire, like most of those of Finistere, is a pretty object in the landscape. In the churchyard there is, as usual throughout Lower Britanny, a little reliquary, as they term those receptacles for the skulls, which are withdrawn from the graves, and exposed to the view of the living. These are generally small stone buildings, and are sometimes highly ornamented with sculpture and

bas-reliefs. That in the churchyard at La Roche Morice is adorned with a series of sculptures in bas-relief, stretching across the whole front of the building. They consist of about twelve or fifteen figures, representing all the various professions and vocations of life. At the end of the line is Death. Armed with his dart, the gaunt king of terrors is represented in the act of pursuing the preceding figures, who are flying before him; and above his head, in gothic letters, are the words "Je vous tue tous." The date of this work is 1639; and the execution is by no means contemptible.

We returned to Landerneau along the high-road; and spent the remainder of the day in a ramble in the forest of the "Land of Ternock"—Gallicè Landerneau—a locality often mentioned in the chronicles of the Round Table. Here are still to be traced the rapidly disappearing vestiges of the chateau de la Joyeuse-Garde, equally celebrated in the same pages. Here resided the preux Lancelot du Lac, and the lovely Yseult.

It must not, however, be supposed that the small remains yet visible are those of the walls in which these worthies dwelt. The form of the foundation is sufficient to shew that they belong to a much later period.

But there is a large vault, whose round and massive arching makes it probable that it may be older than the upper constructions, which it has survived.

In the sixth century, the coast of the Léonais was dreadfully ravaged by Danish pirates; and the thick forest, which then covered the whole country around the bottom of the bay of Brest, served as a place of refuge to many of the inhabitants. They took with them thither, from the more exposed parts of the coast, their cattle and the most portable part of their property, and established themselves in a sort of camp near the spot where the castle then stood. While they were living thus in great anxiety and continual fear, St. Thénénan, who had sailed from Ireland, his native country, to preach the gospel in Armorica, arrived in the bay. As soon as ever the sentinel, who was on guard outside the camp, saw the ship, he cried out, being animated by a miraculous knowledge of the saint's approach, that a servant of God was come to deliver them from their apprehension and misery. The saint was honourably received, and, as he was conducted into the camp, all the forest resounded with the cry, "Merbet a joa a eus er goard;" which means, "They are leading

a great cause of rejoicing unto the guard." From these words, the castle, which stood near and protected the camp, was called "Kastell joa eus er goard;" which the French, "accoutumez," as the old Dominican of Morlaix, who gives this history of the origin of the name, tells us, "à tordre le nez à notre Breton pour l'accommoder à leur idiôme, traduisent par, Chateau *de la Joyeuse Garde.*"

There is some pretty scenery about the mouth of the river Elorn, and the adjoining shores of the bay, which in some parts reminded me of bits of New Forest scenery on the banks of the Southampton water. With the exception of that rich and adorned air of cultivated and improved beauty, which marks a wealthy and highly laboured country, and which is rarely found to any great extent out of England, there are many points of general resemblance between these two woodland districts.

On our return to Landerneau, we found the whole town in a bustle of preparation for the celebration of the Fête Dieu. Almost every street in the town was entirely hung with sheets, and strewed with flowers and rushes; and men, women, and children, were busy in erecting and adorning altars, or "reposoirs,"

as they are called in various parts of the town. We learned that the procession would not take place for a couple of hours. So we returned to the Hôtel de l'Univers, to avail ourselves of the interval for the purpose of eating some dinner.

When we again sallied forth, the streets were still more crowded than before. In the "grande place" a party of the ladies of the town were hurriedly engaged in putting the last touches to the adornments of a very fine and most fantastically ornamented altar. What with tinsel, and coloured paper, and bright brass wire, and ribbons, and an immense quantity of flowers of the most shewy kinds, it really made an exceedingly gay and brilliant appearance.

On either side of the little canopy, which was prepared for the reception of the host, was placed a large silk cushion; and two nursery maids were assiduously training two plump little infants, dressed with wings, &c., to represent cherubim in the parts they were to perform in the ceremony. which was to sit upon the cushions, and hold two enormous nosegays over the sacred canopy. This was not in itself a very arduous duty; but the circumstances under which it was to be performed really rendered it so. For the little

creatures themselves were so round, and the well-stuffed cushions on which they were to be perched were so round also, that it appeared to me very probable they would roll off, directly they were left alone.

At length the procession was seen and heard coming towards the "grande place." The ladies twiddled their last twiddle, and hastily retreated down the steps of the altar to a reverential distance. The nursemaids placed their charges in the best equilibrium they could, upon the pinnacles of the cushions; but finding that they would, as I had suspected, infallibly roll, despite their wings, from the altar to the ground, they were obliged to remain, and hold the cherubim while they performed their office. An immense crowd followed the priests and town authorities, all chanting to the best of their abilities, at the top of their voices. The uproar was tremendous. The procession remained about five minutes at the altar, which the labour of so many hours had been expended in decorating, the prescribed paters and aves were said, the genuflections were made, the incense tossed into the air, and the whole population moved on to repeat the same absurdities at the next reposoir.

After the whole town had been thus per-

ambulated, the procession returned to the church, and the Fête Dieu was over.

It is quite extraordinary how long beforehand and how anxiously this ceremony is looked forward to, especially by the women; and how much trouble and expense they put themselves to, to decorate it and do it honour. Yet, after all, it is not extraordinary either. It is their only amusement. There is no theatre in the town; and the French cannot exist without "spectacle" of some kind. Acting they must have; but the priests disapprove of all theatricals, except those in which they themselves are the principal performers.

The next morning we left Landerneau and proceeded southwards, intending to sleep at Chateaulin, the capital of an arrondissement, about eight leagues and a half from that town. But we purposed to make the distance somewhat greater, by finding our way thither across the country between the high-road and the sea. We traversed a succession of steep, though not high, hills, well wooded, and affording here and there pretty peeps of the sea between them; and arrived at the village of Daoulas by breakfast-time.

This place was the principal object which had induced us to abandon the more direct

route for a circuitous one. There existed at this village, up to the period of the revolution, an abbey celebrated in the Breton chronicles, which was founded in the sixth century.

There is hardly a church, or a convent, throughout Britanny, that has not preserved a legendary account of the manner and circumstances of its foundation. The tale which tradition has preserved, respecting that of Daoulas, is briefly this.

St. Jaona, an Irish prince, nephew of St. Pol, came over to Armorica in the sixth century; and was, by his uncle, made "rector" of Braspars. This part of the country was still entirely Pagan; and St. Jaona laboured zealously, amid difficulties and dangers, to spread the new faith among his parishioners and the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts. Now it so happened that the lord of Faou of those days was as zealous a Pagan as Jaona was a Christian; and as he could not answer the Saint's arguments, he determined to stop his mouth. He watched his time, therefore; and one day, accompanied by a chosen band of ferocious Pagans, when most of the ecclesiastics in that part of the country were assembled in a church near Faou, he surprised them, and succeeded in massacring St. Tadec, who was celebrating

mass, and St. Judulus, the abbot of the monastery of Landevenec, and a great number of less distinguished monks. St. Jaona, however, contrived to escape.

But the divine vengeance did not sleep. In punishment for these "two murthers"—*i. e.* that of the two Saints. The historian takes no notice whatever of the nameless rabblement of monks — the lord of Faou became possessed by a devil, and a dragon came up out of the sea, and ravaged the country. After suffering for some time from this scourge, the inhabitants sent a contrite message to St. Pol, begging his intercession with heaven. The Saint arrived, cured the demoniac lord of Faou, who, with all his subjects, as a matter of course, became a proselyte to Christianity, delivered the country from the dragon, which he commanded to follow him home, and enjoined the new convert to found an abbey in expiation of the "two murthers;" of which St. Jaona was made first abbot, and which was called "Daou-glas," the two mournings. This has been corrupted into Daoulas. There can, I should think, be little or rather no doubt that the ancient name of "the black Douglas" must have come from the same sombre Celtic etymology.

As for St. Pol, he set out on his journey

home, with the dragon following him as quietly as a dog; and had got nearly to Landivisieau, when he was overtaken by two inhabitants of Faou, who had followed him to say that it had just been discovered that the dragon had left a young one behind him in his den, who was already beginning to be troublesome. St. Pol ordered the old dragon to go back immediately and fetch his cub, and return with him to him. This, the dragon, though well knowing the fate that awaited them both, punctually did. St. Pol made them both follow him to the Isle of Batz, where he was then residing; and when he got home, he stuck his staff in the ground, and, tying the two dragons to it, left them there till they both perished of hunger. It was from this circumstance that the Isle of Batz received that name—Baz signifying in Breton a staff.

The monastery of the "two mournings" grew by degrees to be wealthy, and was in a flourishing state up to the revolution. The church still remains; but it is a building of the fifteenth century, with the exception of the west front, which, probably, belongs to the eleventh or twelfth. M. Freminville considers it a portion of the original building of the sixth century; but I cannot agree with

him in thinking this probable. It is very like the west fronts of several of the Norman churches, especially on a small scale, that of the conqueror's noble abbey at Caen. In fact, some antiquaries have attributed the foundation of Daoulas Abbey to the twelfth century; on which M. Freminville remarks: "Si sa construction n'eût datée que de 1173, elle nous eût montré des portiques et des fonêtres en ogives accompagnés de tous les ornemens qui caractérisent le gothique oriental, adopté avec autant d'empressement que d'unanimité par les architectes français après la première croisade." This can, I think, hardly be said correctly even of French architects. But it must be remembered, that they had, in all probability, nothing to do with the building of Daoulas. But, in answer to the above observation of M. Freminville, as regarding the progress of architecture in Britanny, let us turn to what he himself says in his remarks on the abbey of Beauport. "Nous ferons observer à ce sujet, que quoique le genre de l'architecture romane ou à pleins ceintres, fut absolument abandonné dans les autres parties de la France au *commencement du treizième siècle,* et remplacé généralement alors par le genre arabe ou ogival, il ne l'était pas totalement *encore à cette époque* dans la

Bretagne, les changements et les innovations pénètrant toujours plus tard dans cette province reculée, et qui sous ce rapport se trouvait presque toujours arriérée d'un demi-siècle au moins à l'égard des autres."

There remain also at Daoulas some fragments of very elegant cloisters of an earlier date than that of the church, which seemed rapidly going to decay. Perhaps they belong to the same period at the west front. The old priest who walked over the ruins with us, told us that some pious persons had wished to purchase the site and the remaining buildings, with a view of establishing there a nunnery; but that the proprietor asked so exorbitant a price, that the project was abandoned.

From Daoulas we walked on to l'Hôpital, a little insignificant village, where the knights of Malta had once a commandery. Their church alone still remains.

Near this village, on the banks of the estuary of the river Douarmenezare, are the most productive quarries of the celebrated Kersanton. It is found in large rounded separate masses of very various sizes, imbedded in a sort of sandstone. We saw the outline of some of these masses, which had been recently laid bare. They look like huge

knots in the sandstone. When fresh from the quarry, the Kersanton is of a bright blueish grey, and very fine in the grain.

From l'Hôpital we walked on through a varied country to Faou. The dark mass of the Menez-Hom hills were in front of us, the sea on our right, and on the left a wide extent of forest, which still covers a considerable number of wolves. In a hard winter they venture near the villages, and there are always some losses among the sheep.

Faou is a little town, which hardly deserves to be called more than a village, and which has nothing whatever to interest a traveller. Not far from it is the church of Notre Dame de Rumengol, one of the most celebrated places of pilgrimage in Britanny.

Beyond Faou we crossed some of the high downs which we had seen before us all day, and beyond these passed through some very pretty country before arriving at Chateaulin. The little village of Port Dubuis, where there is a royal powder-manufactory, is extremely picturesque. The road makes a sudden and rapid dip into a narrow oak-wooded valley, from the recesses of which rise the murmurs of unseen waterfalls. The sides of this valley are so steep that the road is obliged to descend into it by a zig-zag cut in the face of the hill,

which thus commands in one direction a view of the rich woods which line the ravine, narrowing as it runs up among the downs, and in the other a fine sea view, which, with a glancing white sail or two to diversify its surface, makes a picture advantageously framed in an opening of the dark-looking hills.

At the village of Port Launay, the road comes upon the river Aulne, or Avon, which is rendered navigable, and forms part of the canal from Nantes to Brest, and follows its bank to Chateaulin, which we reached about seven o'clock, after a long and fatiguing day's walk.

We found "La Poste" here a pretty good inn; and cleaner than usual, which appeared to be accounted for by the host's being a Norman. He entertained the most utter contempt for the Bretons; and wound up a long account of their incredible bigotry and ignorance, by declaring that he firmly believed that they knew the names of the saints better than those of the ministry.

The country around Chateaulin is called in Britanny the Breton Switzerland. And, though I must confess that I did not see any thing which could, in my opinion, justify such an ambitious comparison, yet, it must be owned, that there is much which is extremely

pretty. Upon a high cliff above the river, are the trifling but picturesque remains of a castle. It is worth while to climb the hill on which they stand, not for their sake, for there is nothing left but a few shapeless fragments of walls, but for the sake of the view from the bold rock, which itself, quite isolated, stands at the junction of four valleys.

All the rock in the neighbourhood is slate. There are numerous quarries; but it appeared to me to be of an inferior description, and to be worked in a very rude and imperfect manner. It is brought, for instance, on men's backs from the quarry to the surface—a labour which might be performed in a quarter of the time, and with an immense saving of toil and expence by the most simple mechanism of a pulley-rope and basket.

The town of Chateaulin is a most miserable "chef lieu d'arrondissement;" and is devoid of any single object of interest. We left it, therefore, the next day, after a morning's walk in the pretty environs,.by the diligence for Quimper.

The road we travelled was similar in character to the latter part of yesterday's journey. The country consisted of a succession of bleak downs, divided by thickly wooded valleys, till we approached Quimper, when its

aspect softened, and signs of greater cultivation and a more fertile soil were apparent. The diligence deposited us in the "Place" at Quimper, at half-past two o'clock, and we took up our quarters at an old-fashioned inn hard by.

CHAPTER XLI.

Quimper—Finistere—Market—Sporting—Peasantry—Wedding—Anecdote—Ceremonies previous to a Wedding—Dialogue between the Tailors—Wedding Party—Costume—Marriage Feast—Excess—Dancing—Ceremonies and Customs subsequent to the Feast—Grand Mass in the Cathedral—Anecdote—A French Hack—Douarnenez—Sardine Fishery—Point Croix—Ride to the Ponte du Raz Light-House—View thence—City of Ys—Superstitions—Claudian's Account of the Ponte du Raz—Druidical Remains—Return to Quimper.

We remained at Quimper for several days, and were much pleased with our sojourn there. To any one who might wish to observe the peculiarities of Breton manners and mode of life, and to form a tolerably accurate idea of the general style and nature of the country without the trouble and fatigue of travelling all over it, I would recommend Quimper as their head-quarters.

It is the capital of the department of Finistere, which is to Britanny what Connaught is to Ireland—the last and most remote stronghold—to which all the ancient usages, customs, superstitions, and peculiarities, charac-

teristic of the separate people, retreat, as they are driven back by the advancing tide of civilization, and forced, step by step, to evacuate the territory, more adjacent to countries farther advanced in the race of improvement.

The town itself has many attractions. A market extremely well supplied with vegetables, fish, fowl, fruit, and butter, all exceedingly cheap — environs of considerable beauty — an extremely picturesque river for boating — excellent salmon fishing — and unrestricted sporting, with plenty of partridges, woodcocks, snipe, and hares; and for the sportsman, who will extend his rambles a little farther afield into the extensive forests in the neighbourhood of Scäer, foxes, wolves, boars, and stags, would all go far to make Quimper a very desirable residence, if man were "made to live alone," or his happiness could be secured by the ample supply of all his physical wants. The following list of prices will show at how cheap a rate the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life may be procured here. Meat, eight, nine, ten sous a pound, French; excellent bread two sous a pound; potatoes, thirty sous the hundred pounds; a chicken, six or seven sous; a woodcock, a sous and half; eggs, three sous a

dozen; best butter, ten sous a pound; salmon, eight sous a pound.

One or two English families have been tempted by these advantages to reside here; but I should think that they might apply many passages of Alexander Selkirk's lament to their own case.

The morrow of our arrival was market-day at Quimper, and afforded us a good opportunity of seeing the peasants, both male and female, of the different canons in the neighbourhood. The costumes were extremely various. But those of the men differed principally in colour, the form of most of them being the same as that of the figure which forms the frontispiece of Volume I. The dresses of the women were more diversified. Some were extremely ugly and sack-like; but the majority were becoming. There are some cantons in this part of the country, particularly celebrated for the beauty of the women. Those of Fouesnant, a canton to the south of Quimper, on the coast at the mouth of the river Odet, are especially famous; and from the specimens of the Fouesnantaises, which I saw in Quimper market, I think justly so. Their dress is remarkably becoming; and their figures are frequently perfect. They wear no sort of corset, except the

pretty little spencer, which forms their outer garment, laced up in front of their waist, and opening above to allow for the swell of the bosom, so that the edges of it shape out the figure of a heart. And, with nature's handiwork, thus undefaced by whalebone or cording, I have seen waists and busts in the market, at Quimper, which many a courtly dame might sigh for, and which no "modiste" could manufacture.

We had the good fortune this morning to hear of a wedding which was to take place in the town to-day; and, after a little inquiry, to learn the place where the nuptial festival was to be celebrated. I had been particularly anxious to be present at a peasant's wedding. It is the event of their lives to which the greatest number of strange customs and ancient observances are attached; and among the richer peasants the wedding is often celebrated with an extraordinary degree of pomp and expense. We heard of one at Chateaulin, when we were just too late to be present, to which twelve hundred guests had been invited; and a whole village of tents erected to accommodate them. Nor was this by any means a singular instance. Our host at Chateaulin had been one of the twelve hundred guests at this gigantic festival, and was well acquainted

with the parties. He told us that the bride was the daughter of a very rich farmer of the neighbourhood, and the bridegroom, a tanner of Nantes, who, of course, dressed himself like other city tradesmen, and whose wife would associate with the bourgeoise ladies of that rich town. But it had been inserted by the bride and her friends, as an express stipulation in the contract of marriage, that she should never be required to relinquish her peasant's dress, or exchange the ancient fashion of her native canton for the much despised garments of the town.

Many of the ancient customs connected with marriage are said to be rapidly becoming extinct, if they are not so already, in most parts of the country. I was told, however, that in some of the forest cantons, to the East of Quimper, Scäer, Banalec, and Rosporden, for instance, more of these are yet preserved than in any other part of the province. In the canton of Scäer, and, I believe, in some other secluded districts, the custom, recently universal in Lower Britanny, of wooing by proxy, still prevails.

I spoke in a former chapter of the Bas-Breton tailor as being a personage of much importance in the social life of the peasants. He it is who conducts the delicate nego-

ciations which precede a marriage. When a young peasant has fixed his affections upon a girl, he seeks the tailor, and confides his passion to him. This plenipotentiary then proceeds to the lady's dwelling, and hangs about till he can find an opportunity of talking with her alone. Having found this, he commences the conversation with some rustic common-place topics, but soon adroitly turns it to the object of his embassy. His business is then to represent his employer as the most eligible "parti" in the commune, and ply her with all the arguments and eloquence which his long experience has taught him are most powerful in such cases.

If his negociation is successful, the matter is then laid before the parents of either party; and if no opposition is made by them to the projected match, a day is appointed for a meeting.

On the day fixed, the tailor, with a white rod in his hand, and grotesquely clad with one red stocking, and one purple one, brings the young man with his father, or some other relative, to the house of his mistress. There, while the old folks talk over the matter, the young people retire to the farther part of the house, and enjoy a long and uninterrupted conversation. "Cette heure," says Souvestre,

" est la plus belle dans la vie d'une Cornouaillaise, car c'est la seule où la fierté dédaigneuse de l'homme pour l'autre sexe fait place à une égalité caressante." This tête-à-tête is considered inviolable. No one will venture to interrupt the lovers. And, when at length they themselves bring their billing and cooing to an end, they return to the table hand in hand. Some white bread, wine, and brandy, is then produced, and the affianced pair eat with the same knife, and drink from the same glass.

Before they part, another day of meeting, also at the bride's house, is appointed. This is termed " velladen," or the view. Upon the occasion all parties appear in their holyday dresses; and great attention is paid to arrange every thing in the house and about the farm to the best advantage. Every sort of device is resorted to, to give an air of opulence to the family; and many of the various articles carefully disposed so as to be seen by the visitors are borrowed for the occasion. When the bridegroom's party arrives, a great deal of bargaining takes place, and the conditions of the marriage contract are then fixed. When this is done, the fathers strike their hands in token that it is a bargain; and a day is appointed for the marriage.

A week before the day, each separately go round and invite all their friends to the wedding feast. The invitation is generally in verse, and is delivered by the inviter at the door of the houses of those who are invited.

When at length the day of the marriage has arrived, the strangest ceremony of all takes place. The tailor's services are now again put in requisition. Early in the morning, the bridegroom, with his relations and *his* tailor, present themselves before the door of the bride's house, on the threshold of which, her friends and *her* tailor are assembled to receive them. Then ensues a long dialogue in verse between the two tailors. The gentleman's spokesman represents his party as travellers who ask for hospitality. The poet retained on the lady's side replies that the roads are full of vagabonds, that he has nothing to say to them, and that they had better pursue their way. A good deal of bantering then succeeds. At last the man's tailor declares the real object for what he is come; and sets forth the good qualities of his employer—how he can plough as much in a day as three hired labourers—how he can alone replace a cart which has been overturned. — He recounts his triumphs at wrestling matches, and adds that in his hand the

"penbas" is more powerful than a sword in that of a soldier.

The other champion retorts by enumerating the perfections of the lady. She is light and souple as the blossom-covered branches of the broom ; and when the dance begins, she, timid virgin as she is, holds in one hand the hand of her mother, and in the other that of a female friend. But this paragon, he concludes, is not here ; she has long since left her father's house.

"You deceive me;" replies the other. "The yew-tree is made for the churchyard, the rose for the garden, and young girls to grace the home of a husband. Do not throw us into despair! Lead hither by the hand her, whom we desire, and we will place her at the wedding-feast near her bridegroom, under the eyes of her friends."

"It seems we must yield to you, friend, you are so pressing," says the lady's poet. He then goes into the house, and, returning with an old woman, says : "Is this then the rose you are seeking ?"

"From the venerable appearance of this woman," replies the other, "I judge that she has well fulfilled her task in this world, and that she has conferred happiness on him who has loved her. But she has ended that which

the other must now begin. She is not the woman I seek."

The other returns again to the house, and leads forth a young married woman; saying, "Here is a young girl, beautiful as the morning star. Her cheeks are like roses; and her eyes are of crystal. One glance from them can render a heart sick for ever! This must be the fair one you want."

"Certainly this soft cheek and youthful freshness look like those of a maiden. But this finger, bearing the marks of rubbing— has it not often been rubbed with pap for an infant to suck?"

"Nothing escapes your notice! Tell me, then, at once, is this she whom you want"— bringing out a little girl of ten years old.

"That is exactly what she, whom I seek, was eight years ago. Some day this pretty child will make the happiness of a husband. But she must remain yet a long while on the espalier. The one I want waits but the gardener's basket to carry her to the table of the nuptial feast."

The bride's spokesman then yields. He leads her from the house, saying: "It is enough. You deserve her whom you ask for."

The two families then enter the house to-

gether, and the tailor says: "Behold the girl you have chosen! Your hands, children! Man! you have now a wife to defend, and to make happy. Let us not ever see her weeping at the door of thy house, like a stranger. For God avenges the weak, who weep."

Then a prayer is said. All present are invited to the wedding; and the man's poet says: "Come, maiden! bend your knees, and bow your head beneath the hands of your father, which bless you. You are weeping! Look at your father and your poor mother! They are weeping too; but how much more bitter are their tears than your's! They are about to be separated from a daughter whom they have cradled and danced in their arms! Whose heart would not melt at the sight of such grief? Yet these tears must cease! Tender father, see there your child. Look upon her. Her arms are stretched out towards you! Poor mother, put your hands upon her! A prayer and a blessing for the child who is about to leave you! Enough, now! You have obeyed the commandments of God. Rise, maiden! embrace your parents, and arise in strength, for henceforward you belong to a man."

M. Souvestre gives this scene, with the parts of the two tailors, which, it must be

remembered, are in the original Breton in verse, at much greater length, but I have extracted the most remarkable passages.

After the service of the church, to which they then repair, they return immediately to the feast. This is in some cases provided at the house of the bridegroom, but more ordinarily at some "auberge" in the neighbourhood. If the former is the case, every guest brings some present to the new married couple. If the latter, every one pays his own share of the feast.

It was about half-past twelve when the stable-boy of our inn, whom we had sent to watch the arrival of the bridal party from church, came running to tell us that they were approaching. We hurried to the spot, and were just in time to see the cavalcade arrive at the door of their inn. They came on a great number of horses, most of them carrying a man and woman. The bridegroom was marked by a long black cloak, and a ribbon round his hat. The bride was, of course, dressed in her richest "costume de fête," as were most of her guests also.

The figure which forms the frontispiece to this volume is an accurate representation of the bride and her costume.

These holyday dresses, which are scrupu-

lously preserved as such, and are not worn even on ordinary Sundays, are more expensive than might be supposed. As much as five or six hundred francs are sometimes given for a complete and handsome holyday suit. Long and penurious saving is submitted to, to supply the means of acquiring a dress, and, when it is once obtained, it lasts at least one whole life, and probably in most cases more.

The gaudy-coloured ribbon, mixed with silver threads, and the imitation of gold and silver lace, with which they adorn their dresses in great quantity, is made expressly and solely for this market at Lyons.

When they had all dismounted, and entered the house, and time enough had elapsed for them to have taken their places at the table, we went in to look at them. This, we were told, would not give the least offence, but would rather be considered as a compliment. Many more guests had arrived on foot, besides those who formed the principal party; and, when we entered the house, there were about five hundred of them.

They were ranged at long narrow tables in two very large low rooms. All the men sat on one side of the table, and all the women on the other. At the top of the principal

table were the happy pair opposite to each other; and between them an enormous dish of butter, moulded into a gigantic crown, and ornamented with flowers. This is invariably the most conspicuous dish at a marriage feast, and is always placed between the married couple. It is sometimes formed into the shape of a man on horseback, sometimes into that of a church, and frequently, when it constitutes the present of a rich farmer, is so heavy as to require two men to carry it.

That corner of the room, in which the bride and bridegroom were sitting when we entered, was hung with a white sheet, and adorned with nosegays. Two peasants, with their hats in their hands, were carrying round to the guests, each a large plateful of little square bits of bread, which the priest had blessed. Every one took a morsel, and, as they eat it, crossed themselves; and the men lifted their hats, which, with this exception, they wore during the whole repast.

The soup was then brought in, and soon despatched; and the wine circulated briskly. After the soup, they all came out into the street, which, in front of the house, swelled into a sort of "place," and danced awhile. They then returned to the next course, then came out to dance again; and so continued

eating, and drinking, and dancing, alternately till about eight o'clock in the evening.

These festivals are generally occasions of the most disgusting excesses both of eating and drinking. Before the end of the dinner many were drunk; and some still more revolting evidences of gluttonous voracity were visible. But these rebellions of the abused stomachs caused only an interruption, and not a cessation, of excess; for the subjects of them returned with renewed avidity to the banquet.

At about seven o'clock I saw the last service of meat — the "rôti" — carried in. I suppose there had been no room to dress it in the house; for it was brought from another "cabaret," down the street, preceded by the bagpipers playing on their most discordant pipes. The quantity of solid meat I thus saw carried in to these men, already overpowered with excess, was perfectly astonishing. There were twelve huge brown pans, like milk-pans, each containing several joints. In one I counted no less than twelve roast ducks.

When, by a last effort, this food, or as much as possible of it, had been swallowed, those who could still stand came out once more to dance to the sound of the bagpipe. The

men always began the dance first. Three or four linked themselves together by their little fingers, the only mode of joining hands ever used in dancing, or in taking the hand of a woman, and thus, with a sort of a shuffling, jerking, movement of the feet, followed each other, keeping time in some degree to the music of the indefatigable bagpipe. The women would then join first one, then another, hooking on with their little fingers to the last of the line. There did not appear to be any partners in the dance; and in the line of dancers, which gradually grew longer till almost all present had joined in it, there were sometimes two or three women, and sometimes two or three men together. The leader of the file seemed to be the place of honour, conceded to the best dancer, and was always occupied by a man.

After continuing this dull and uninspiring dance, occasionally diversified by a somewhat brisker "grande rond," which broke off into a movement, like that of the game called thread-the-needle, till nearly dusk, the guests began to depart, the piper playing before the different parties, as they went, as far as the skirts of the town.

The ceremonies which are observed by the bride and bridegroom and their friends after

this, are very various in different parts of the country. In some cantons, the marriage is not consummated till the third night after the ceremony. In others the bride is seized and hidden, and the bridegroom is forced to find her, or in some places to ransom her. Various other absurdities are practised on the new couple in other districts, before they are allowed to retire in peace.

The next day was Sunday. And as the windows of our inn looked out upon the parvis in front of the cathedral, we derived much amusement from watching thence the stream of people going to or returning from the different services. The whole of the open space was thronged with peasants from the neighbouring communes, lounging in groups, with their arms crossed on their breasts, who had been to the first mass at five in the morning, or were waiting for the grand mass at ten.

We attended the latter in the cathedral—the handsomest we had seen in Britanny. The gothic nave is long and lofty; and it would be really a fine church, were it not for a remarkable peculiarity which, in a great measure, destroys the general effect. The choir and the nave are not in a right line, but form an obtuse angle, at the point of the cross formed by the transept.



Drawn and Etched by A. Ke-vien

The church was closely crowded with peasants and women. The men almost entirely occupied the nave, and the women filled the aisles. They all seemed profoundly attentive to the service; and it was a strange and striking thing to hear these wild-looking, earnest-eyed beings thundering forth in rude but unanimous cadence their prolonged "Et cum spiritu tuo-o-o," in answer to the well-known chant of the priest's "Dominus vobiscum."

At the conclusion of the service, the open space in front of the west doors of the cathedral presented a motley and picturesque scene, which was too characteristic to escape my companion's pencil. One old lady I saw carried out in a sedan chair, who might really have belonged to "la vieille cour." Her bearers were peasants in bragou bras, and sabots; and herself and equipage were a most exquisitely preserved and perfect specimen of a generation and state of things long since passed away.

An old colonel of Napoleon's army, whom I met at Quimper, told me that he remembered perfectly well the equipage and attendants of a nobleman of the neighbourhood, who, in the days of his youth, before the revolution, used to come every Sunday morning

to mass at the cathedral. There were no roads from his chateau to the town; and his immense, splendidly gilt, and massively constructed, carriage was dragged in state through the soil by six bullocks, driven by a coachman, and accompanied by numerous attendants on foot, all dressed in the peasant's costume of the country.

The next two days I spent in an excursion to the terrible "Pointe du Raz," while my companion remained sketching among the rich harvest of costumes and pretty scenery which the town and its environs afford. I hired a little horse for the journey, which his owner assured me could go "au gallop comme le vent, et au trot comme un cerf."

At six in the morning he was very punctually brought to the door of the inn, as I had desired. His saddle was an enormous fabric of leather and brass, rising into lofty peaks in front and behind, and his rein was about the size and thickness of a carriage-trace. That my equipment might be in keeping, mine host lent me a most tremendous postilion's whip, long enough to drive five horses with.

Thus accoutred, I walked my steed steadily out of the town; and when I was clear of it, hinted, by a gentle pressure of his sides, that

I would try his stag-like motions. He paid not the slightest attention, however, to my intimations, but continued to walk slowly and sedately on. I was afraid to use my long whip, thinking it quite as likely that the lash might fall on my own face as on my steed's side. All other mode of persuasion, however, I soon found was thrown away upon him. I was obliged, therefore, to attempt it; and I succeeded, by considerable exertion, in swinging the heavy thong around my head, and bringing it to bear upon his haunches. It made him swerve a little to one side; but he took it very patiently, and by no means seemed to consider it as intended to make him accelerate his pace. I began to despair of reaching my journey's end at all, and commenced a persevering course of flogging, a good portion of which fell on my own legs and thighs, but which had eventually the effect of exciting him to a gallop, not at all, to my thinking, resembling the course of the wind, but very much that of an enraged bullock. Having obtained this result, I allowed my arm to rest a little. But the instant the whip ceased its motion, he ceased his; and I soon discovered that if I would progress above two miles an hour, it could be accomplished only by a system of continuous flogging. As for the "trot

comme un cerf," it was quite apparent that he had never trotted, or been taught to trot, or had the remotest shadow of an idea of the theory of trotting, in his life.

And this was the beast I had to ride forty leagues in two days!

Then, besides his laziness, he had every sort of disagreeable trick which ever horse had. He bored to one side of the road. He stumbled continually, and fell two or three times. He stopped short before every gate in the hedge, with a view of tantalizing himself with a look at the field. He insisted obstinately on halting at every " buchon" by the road side.

In short, by the time I got to Pont Croix, where I intended to pass the night, every bone in my skin ached, and my right arm was so stiff that I could literally scarcely lift my food to my mouth.

The country I had passed through was pretty, well-wooded, and fertile-looking. I rested an hour at Douarnenez, a little town, from which the large and deep bay enclosed by the peninsula of Crozon, and the long promontory, which terminates in the Pointe du Raz, takes its name. The whole population and the existence of Douarnenez depend on the Sardine fishery.

This delicious little fish, which the gourmands of Paris so much delight in, when preserved in oil and sent to their capital in those little tin boxes, whose look must be familiar to all who have frequented the Parisian breakfast-houses, is still more exquisite when eaten fresh on the shores which it frequents. They are caught in immense quantities along the whole of the southern coast of Britanny, and on the western shore of Finistere, as far to the northward as Brest, which I believe is the most northern place at which the Sardine fishery exists. . They come into season about the middle of June, and are then sold in great quantities, in all the markets of southern Britanny, at two, three, or four sous a dozen, according to the abundance of the fishery and the distance of the market from the coast. The preserving and boxing for Paris is almost all done at Nantes, whither the fish are carried for the purpose. A large quantity are also salted at the ports where they are caught, for provincial consumption. I was told that the commerce in Sardines, along the coast from L'Orient to Brest, amounted to three millions of francs annually.

I walked down to the beach at Douarnenez, and saw the fishermen mending their enormous nets, which are about twelve or fifteen

feet wide, and four or five hundred feet long. Some were spread upon a little grassy knoll, overlooking the port, and commanding a fine view of the bay, studded with fishing-boats, and the distant Cap de la Chévre at the entrance of it, and the Isle Tristan immediately in front of the town—a spot unenviably marked in history, and linked with a thousand tales of bloodshed and atrocity, from having been the principal haunt and stronghold of the infamous "Fontenelle le ligueur." But the little islet is now a sylvan verdant-looking spot, and would have made a pleasing feature in a landscape, which might have had in the foreground the picturesque and well-grouped figures of the Sardine fishermen, mending their nets.

The town of Pont Croix is remarkable for nothing but the extreme elegance of its spire, and the badness of its inn. I passed a wretched night there ; and the next morning, mounting once more my odious beast of a horse, set out towards the redoubtable "Pointe," intending to return to Pont Croix to breakfast.

I had a good road as far as the little town of Auderne, which gives its name to the wide bay on the other side of the promontory. Beyond this I found no road, or none deserving to be so called. But here, as in very many

other places, a new one is in progress. The country became treeless, and more rocky as I proceeded. I entirely lost my way more than once, and had to ride over a country thickly strewn with loose rocks and stones, and sometimes over tracks of sheer living rock. I was forced too, for the most part of the way, to keep my beast to his heavy, lumbering, cow-like gallop, as I had far too long a day's work before me to allow him to walk. We tumbled down more than once; but I escaped unhurt, and he scrambled up again, apparently very much unconcerned.

At length, after a much longer ride than I had bargained for, I reached the lighthouse, which has recently been built on the extremity of this dreaded promontory. It is certainly a striking spot; and the wild and desolate solitude of the barren and rocky moors around, though these qualities have little to do with the dread with which the sailor regards the "Pointe du Raz," assist the imagination in conceiving it to be the scene of those immemorial and ever-recurring tales of disaster and death, which have conferred on it so fearful a reputation.

The cliffs are of no very great height. I have seen much finer, and more stupendous, on the northern coast of Cornwall. But the

sea which rolls at their base is tremendous. Even in the best season of the year, there rarely passes a month without a wreck ; and there had been two within the last three weeks.

In winter the scene must be sublimely awful. The guardian of the lighthouse told me that the spray continually breaks over it, though the cliffs on which it stands are two hundred and fifty feet (French) above the level of the sea ; and it is situated more than a hundred yards from their edge. I should very much like to pass a month of winter there. I asked the man if it would be practicable to do so. He said that nothing could be easier, if I would only bring my own bedding, and be content to share their fare. There was plenty of room in the lighthouse, plenty of firing, and they could find me a bedstead.

About a league out to sea, beyond the extreme point of the headland, is the storied Isle de Sein. This was the principal establishment of Druidesses in Britanny; and a thousand gloomy and dread-inspiring traditions and superstitions are yet attached to the spot. Indeed, the whole of this remarkable promontory is legendary ground.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the

Ponte du Raz, constant and immemorial tradition has placed the site of the once flourishing and magnificent city of Is, whose remains, it is said, may still be seen beneath the waves at low water, and the names of whose streets yet live in the tradition of the fishermen of the coast. Is, or Ys, as some historians write the name, had disappeared from the face of the earth, at a period anterior to the earliest notices of certain history; but an invariable tradition has always existed, which declares that it was swallowed up by the sea, which happened, says the old Canon of Quimper, Moreau, (the historian of the League in Britanny) writing at the end of the sixteenth century, twelve or thirteen hundred years ago, " par une juste punition de Dieu, pour les péchés du peuple de ladicte ville d' Is." The wealth and magnificence which tradition has assigned to this sunken city, are a favourite theme with most of the Breton chroniclers; and some of them do not scruple to assert that Par-Is was so named, as having been equal to Is.

At the foot of the cliffs, on one side of the extreme point, is the "Baie des Trépassés," —the Bay of the Departed. The boldest and most reckless sailor passes not this dread spot without a vow and a prayer. The few fre-

quenters of the solitary shore of this bay, associated with so many melancholy remembrances, are said to hear the cries of the restless ghosts of those who have perished beneath these fatal waves. And the fishermen of the coast are waked in the dead of night by some supernatural power, which summons them to pass over in their boats an invisible crew of souls to the sacred isle. The boat sinks in the water more than if she had no load, but to the eye her cargo is imperceptible. Arrived at the opposite shore, invisible beings count and examine the dead; and the awe-struck boatmen are permitted to return to their homes.

These superstitions, like most of those still current in Britanny, owe their birth to no Christian parentage. The internal evidence afforded by the style and character of these fictions would probably be a sufficient proof of this to those who have paid any attention to the general subject of popular superstitions. But we have a direct testimony to the Ante-Christian antiquity of the wild fables still believed by the inhabitants of this district, which is, in itself, curious and interesting. That the following passage from Claudian refers to the spot of which we are speaking, there can, I think, be little doubt.

> "Est locus extremum pandit qua Gallia littus,
> Oceani prætentus aquis, quo fertur Ulysses
> Sanguine libato, populum movisse silentem;
> Illic umbrarum tenui stridore volantum,
> Flebilis auditur quæstus; simulacra coloni,
> Pallida, defunctasque vident migrare figuras."

It is extremely curious thus to trace the source from which classical antiquity borrowed some of its fables, as well as to find the same superstitions still flourishing in full vigour in the same spot, after the lapse of so many ages.

I stood a long time contemplating the wide prospect of sea and coast, which the top of the cliff commands, and thinking over the numerous fantastic tales, which had been told me as connected with almost every prominent object within the range of my eye. The whole of the promontory is thickly studded with Druidical remains; a sure indication, as I have observed it generally to be in this country, that the district in which they occur is rich in legendary lore. But neither space, nor the reader's patience, would suffice for the repetition of tales, many of them striking and picturesque enough in their details: but whose general scope and character may be conceived from what I have already said.

Before leaving the Point, I descended to the rugged beach by a somewhat difficult

path, at a little distance from the lighthouse, and there met an old seaweed gatherer. He had been a sailor, and could, therefore, speak French. I entered into conversation with him, and soon succeeded in adding something to my budget of marvels. When, however, I attempted, from curiosity, to see what he would say, to enter into the how and the why of some of the wonders he had been recounting, he shook his floating grey locks, and, pointing with a severe and rebuking expression of countenance towards heaven, turned from me without vouchsafing any other reply. I was struck by his appearance and manner; and I thought that the sentiment which he had felt to be too deep and too grand for his rude language, might have found fitting utterance in the magnificent words of the greatest master of sublime diction.

> "Vuolsi cosi colà, dove si puote
> Cio che si vuole."

It was noon before I reached Point Croix, and my breakfast on my return. And when I arrived at Quimper at night, after having ridden twenty-five leagues in the day, I could scarcely get off the saddle; and I vowed a solemn vow never again, if I could possibly help it, to bestride a French hack, warranted to trot "comme un cerf."

CHAPTER XLII.

Promenade at Quimper—View from it—Excursion to the Pointe de Penmarch—Pont l'Abbé—Walk to Penmarch—Druidical Remains—Ruined City of Kerity-Penmarch—Its Prosperity—Legislation in the Fifteenth Century—" Notre Dame de la Joie"—Lighthouse and Chapel—Mother Begging for her Children—Excursions from Quimper—Quimperlé—Abbey of Saint Croix—The Victoria, of Quimperlé—Characteristic Procession.

Before leaving Quimper we took several other excursions into the surrounding country, and had many delightful walks in the more immediate neighbourhood. The environs of the town itself, and the banks of the Odet, almost the whole of the way down to the sea, are extremely pretty. Quimper has a promenade too, which, though by no means equal to the stately grandeur of the magnificent Cour d' Ajot at Brest, is picturesque to a degree, which town promenades can rarely be.

On the other side of the river, immediately opposite to the town, there is a sufficient level space for a handsome double allée of fine

trees; and beyond this the bank rises precipitously to the height of three or four hundred feet. The whole of this very steep hill is covered with thick wood, consisting mostly of fine timber trees, and forms a leafy woodland background to the grey masses of the town, as seen from the other side, which produces an effect as peculiar as it is beautiful.

But this is only a small part of the pleasure derivable from this wooded hill. The whole of the steep is cut into terraces, along which well-kept paths penetrate the thickness of the wood. This is so managed as every here and there to afford the most delightful views of the town, lying immediately beneath it. The grey front and massive towers of the cathedral, the thousand varied forms of roof and gable, the river with its three bridges, and shipping lying at the quay, in just sufficient quantity for picturesque effect, though lamentably small for any other purpose, and the pretty, richly-wooded and cultivated valley, stretching away towards the sea, produce a landscape of no common beauty. I passed many an hour, sunrise, noontide, and sunset, upon these pleasant terraces; and, but that a charming coup d'œil will not, any more than, or even in conjunction with, cheap chickens, of itself suffice to constitute happiness, I could

be well content to dwell where they might be my daily walk.

One of our more distant excursions was to the Point of Penmarch, another rocky and dangerous promontory of this rugged and storm-beaten coast, about eight or nine leagues to the south-west to Quimper. A little mail cart, which left the town at four in the morning, carried us to the now insignificant town of Pont-l'Abbé. This little place, now an humble chef-lieu de canton, was, during the middle ages, the feodal capital of the largest lordship of Cornouailles; and from the end of the twelfth to the end of the fifteenth century we find a long series of notices of the knights banneret, lords of Pont-l'Abbé, in the civil, military, and ecclesiastical, history of Britanny.

At one time, building a church, at another storming a castle, now obeying the summons of this sovereign to the assembly of the "states" of the nation, and now attending him in the field, we find the bold barons of Pont-l'Abbé continually busy, during the three hundred years I have named. A part of their castle still remains, and commands the long bridge, by which the road from Quimper crosses the estuary, on which the town is built. This old fortress has not, like so many

others in the province, been left to the gentle though deadly touch of time, which beautifies even as it effaces; but has been partly destroyed, and partly repaired by hands under which either operation has been equally fatal to all beauty.

We did not stop to make any halt at Pont-l'Abbé, but walked on to the village of Penmarch. As we approached the coast, the general appearance of the country became the same as that in the neighbourhood of the "Pointe du Raz;"—except, indeed, that that is high ground, and this is flat. But the total absence of trees, the scanty measure of cultivation, and the rocky nature of the soil, are the same.

The whole promontory of Penmarch, consisting of some square miles, is a flat plain, but little elevated above the level of the sea. Most of such tracts on sea-coasts are marshy and liable to inundations; and I never before saw a promontory at all similar to that of Penmarch in this respect. This large flat is entirely composed of rock, with a very thin covering of soil. Any thing more arid and dreary than this wide-stretching, stony plain can hardly be conceived.

We saw several menhirs and no fewer than four dolmens on this promontory. One of the

latter is very near the side of the road from Pont-l'Abbé to Penmarch. It is a very perfect one, and is known by the peasants under the name of Ti Chorriquet, which means the house of the dwarfs. It is remarkable, that, while the comparatively few Celtic monuments, which exist in other parts of France, are usually said by the peasants of the country around them to have been built by giants, the Bretons always maintain them to be the work of the "korrics," or "gaurics," a race of dwarfs, whom they believe to possess supernatural power.

At Penmarch we got a fish, and some coarse bread, and boiled milk for breakfast; and then walked on, through a region increasing in sterility and nakedness, towards the lighthouse lately completed on the extremity of the Point. The air of utter desolation is here enhanced to the utmost, by the appearance of extensive ruins stretching far to the right and to the left.

In fact, the solitary path we were following lies through the midst of the site of an ancient and abandoned city — that of Kerity-Penmarch. This is not one of those ancient Armorican cities, which perished at a period anterior to the records of history, of whose existence tradition only has informed us, and

whose site is still a matter of dispute and conjecture. Of Kerity-Penmarch, its unmistakeable and wide-spread ruins plainly declare the locality and former extent; and history speaks of it as of a flourishing and commercial town, down to about the middle of the sixteenth century.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century it was so prosperous, and fortunes were made here so rapidly, that Duke John V. of Britanny issued an edict to restrain those who, in great numbers, abandoned their agricultural pursuits, and flocked to Penmarch, there to engage in commerce, being induced thereto merely and entirely, as Duke John complains, "par convoitise et avarice, et par la grande abondance de la pécune et de la monnaie qu'ils ont, et du grand gain et profict, qu'ils trouvent en ce faisant." He goes on, therefore, to forbid these mercenary-minded traders from exercising a variety of branches of commerce, and all others whomsoever, except those to whom he shall grant a licence — a favour which, of course, he extended only to those who traded from purer and more elevated motives.

There existed off the coast, at the distance of about thirty or forty leagues to the west of the Point, a bank frequented by cod, from

which fishery, during the stricter times of ecclesiastical discipline, and especially before the discovery of Newfoundland, immense profits were made. And it must have been this circumstance, in all probability, which first caused the gathering of a town in so remote, inclement, and unpromising, a spot. The town, it seems, was never walled or fortified; and it probably grew to be such gradually, as the motives, which so strangely excited Duke John's anger, drew to the spot fresh capitalists and speculators. Besides the cod-fishery, however, it carried on, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, an extensive trade in corn, cattle, and linen cloth, with the Spanish ports of Gallicia and the Asturias. And the names of several of the streets, which, with the usual tenacity of everything in Brittany, still remain attached to the tracks which traverse the ruins, such as "la Grande Rue," "la Rue des Marchands," "la Rue des Argentiers," prove that Kerity-Penmarch was really a town of some wealth and importance.

Two small villages, one at either end of the wide space, which the town once covered, still preserve between them the double name of the old town; one being called Penmarch, and the other, nearer the sea, Kerity. Besides the churches, which now serve as places of

worship for these two villages, there are among the ruins of the town the remains of no less than four others, another proof of the former population of the place. On one of them, termed "la Chapelle de Notre Dame de la Joie," M. Freminville makes the curious observation that, throughout Britanny, all the churches and chapels dedicated to Notre Dame de la Joie, Notre Dame de Liesse, or other synonymous names, were founded on spots where the Celts worshipped a divinity, who united the attributes of the Grecian Cybele and Venus. This is another curious instance of the truth of the remarks made in a former chapter respecting the origin of the chapel of "Notre Dame de la Haine, at Treguier. In fact, it is evident throughout the country that "Our Lady" was called on to mother every Pagan worship that could not be otherwise disposed of; and the mere addition of the words "Notre Dame" to the quality or passion worshipped in a Pagan divinity, was deemed sufficient to christianize the idolatry.

We walked on through this desolate scene, and came to the lighthouse, built among a world of savage-looking black rocks. We ascended to the top of it by a hundred and ninety-seven steps, and examined the magnifi-

cent lantern which has just been placed there at a cost of forty thousand francs. The view from this tower is by no means comparable to that from the "Pointe de Raz," or that from "Cap St. Mathieu." There is nothing to be seen but the wide extent of water, and a long line of low coast, bristling with black jagged rocks.

Close to the lighthouse is the abandoned shell of a very small but massively built little chapel. I could not help fancying the two buildings types of the ages at which they were respectively raised. The object which the builders of either edifice had in view was the same. Both were intended to secure the sailor's safe passage by this dangerous spot, and were deemed each at the period of its construction as the most efficacious means of protecting him from its perils. Our pious fathers prayed for the result they wished to obtain, and neglected the obvious human means which Providence has placed at our disposal for the attainment of it. *We* push our empire over matter to the uttermost; but, amid our physical improvements, the humble chapel is neglected and goes to ruin.

We returned through the silent streets of the ruined city, and reached Pont-l'Abbé with some difficulty in time to return with the

mail-cart to Quimper. About a mile before we reached the city, we saw a young mother begging by the road-side for her two children, who lay sick with fever in a little straw at her feet. It was market-day, and many peasants were passing on their return from the town. The poor woman was alternately busied with imploring the charity of the passers-by, and endeavouring to soothe the restless wailing of her babes. At all events, they were better off where they were, than shut up in a drawer, like the poor child we had seen in the hills. I saw one or two pieces of money given her; but her style of begging was not half so impressive or eloquent as that of the beggar-woman at St. Pol de Leon;—probably because the one was reduced to beg by temporary distress, while the other had become from long experience a consummate mistress of the profession.

We made several other excursions from Quimper, returning to our inn there as our head-quarters, at the end of the day, or of two days, as the case might be. We rambled thus to Concarneau, a little town of considerable military strength, fortified and built on an island rock; to Benaudet, at the mouth of the river Odet, a delightful excursion down a very beautiful stream; to Pontaven, nest-

ling in its romantic valley, through which flows the picturesque rivulet which gives it its pretty name; to the forests of Scäer, where we fell in with a troop of those grim demons of the wood, the charcoal-burners; and to many other equally pretty but less notable spots nearer the city. Suffice it, for the information of those who may ever chance to be at Quimper, with time to spare for a few rambles in the surrounding country, that they can hardly wander amiss, especially to the south-east of the town.

When at length we had traversed the neighbouring cantons in almost all directions, we left Quimper, after having spent a longer time in it than in any town in Britanny, and with more regret than we had felt at quitting any other. I should like to return and spend a summer month or two at Quimper much.

We journeyed by the diligence to Quimperlé, the small capital of a very small arrondissement. It is an extremely pretty little town, and was before the revolution noted as a favourite place of retirement of a great number of half-pay officers and small rentiers, to whom the cheapness of its markets and houses, its cheerful situation, and the certainty of finding there many of their own class, recommended it. It is situated at the

confluence of two streams, the Isole and the Ellé, two rivers whose winding valleys and wooded banks are as pretty as their names. We spent the morning of the day we remained there in a long ramble up the stream of the Elle, and we were delighted by the variety of beautiful combinations of wood, rock, and water, which its narrow, deep, and very tortuous valley presents.

In the evening, we went to see the church of the abbey of St. Cross in Quimperlé. It belonged to a large and rich convent of Benedictines before the revolution; and the spacious and handsome modern buildings are now used for various purposes by the municipal government, which must be much puzzled to find any means whatever of occupying half the space of the vast pile.

The church, however, still continues to be used as such; and is very remarkable from the peculiarity of its form, and the high antiquity which that testifies. The body of the church is round, with four circular recesses, pointing, one to the east, for the high altar, one to the west, which serves as a sort of vestibule to the west door, and two to the north and south, forming transepts. All the arches are round, and the windows, long, narrow, and very high from the ground. The floor

of the choir is raised very considerably above that of the rest of the church; and under this there is a crypt, whose round arches and short, thick, square-headed pillars, have the appearance of very great antiquity. All the forms and arrangements of the church itself are characteristic of a very early period of the art. M. Freminville contents himself with pronouncing it "bien antérieure" to 1029. I should conceive that it must have been built at least not later than the eighth century. It is, certainly, one of the most interesting morsels of early ecclesiastical architecture I ever saw.

We afterwards enjoyed a twilight stroll a little way down the bank of the river, which is navigable below the town for vessels of small burden; and were amused by seeing moored to the quay a little pleasure-boat much smarter and neater in appearance than any of those it was among, on the stern of which we read: — "The Victoria, of Quimperlé;"—a legend, which at once accounted for her superior elegance.

As we returned into the town, we met a very singular and characteristic procession passing along the silent street. A cart, full of human skulls and other bones, was being drawn by two oxen; and a number of the

peasants, the men with their large round hats in their hands, and their heads bowed down, and the women, with their hands joined in prayer, were following it. We learnt on inquiry that an old cemetery, belonging to a church in another part of the town, was going to be turned into a market-place by the authorities, sorely against the will of the poor peasants, whose fathers lie buried there. Out of respect for their feelings, however, it was determined that all the bones which could be collected should be removed to another spot, consecrated for the purpose of receiving them. An immense number of cart-loads were thus removed; and the poor peasants patiently and piously persevered in following them all to their new resting-place. It put me in mind of the stories told of the Red Indian's veneration for the bones of the ancestors of his tribe. Nor is this the only point of resemblance in the character of the two people.

We watched the cart and its melancholy convoy till it was out of sight, and then booked our places in the diligence for to-morrow, and went to our inn to bed.

CHAPTER XLIII.

L'Orient—Morbihan—The Morbihannais—His Character—Chouannerie in Morbihan—La Soule—Ferocity of the Morbihannais—His Dialect — Hennebon — Anecdotes of his History — Walk to Baud—Venus in Quinipily—Superstitions—Conjectures respecting this Statue—Tradition of the Plain of Pluvigner—Arrival at Auray.

We left Quimperlé by the mail, which runs daily between Brest and Nantes, performing the distance in thirty-six hours; and, passing through l' Orient, arrived at Hennebon about eleven o'clock. I had visited l' Orient in the course of my former excursion in Britanny, and had not then found any source of interest, which could make me wish to remain there now. The same causes as those in operation at Brest have effaced from the appearance of l' Orient all the peculiarities of Breton character; but the town does not possess similar sources of interest of its own. Both are royal dockyards. But the works carried on there are trifling and insignificant,

compared to those of the Port of Brest, and the whole establishment is on a much smaller scale.

We were here in Morbihan, having crossed the frontier of the departments soon after quitting Quimperlé. This department takes its name from the gulf, at the bottom of which Vannes is situated. It is impossible to look at this gulf, and the great number of little islands with which it is studded, without feeling sure that at some former period the sea must have made this region its prey, leaving above the waves the highest points only of the hills, which now form the numerous irregularly shaped islands, that so thickly dot its surface. This gulf was called by the ancient Celts Mor-bihan, — i. e. little sea, — which, in these days, has been given to the whole region around it, as far inland as the southern side of the Méné hills.

The character of Morbihan and of the Morbihannais is strongly marked with peculiarities of its own, which distinguish it from those of the district of Treguier, the Léonais and Cornouaille. The aspect of the country is more arid, rude, and harsh. It has less of natural beauty than either the Côtes du Nord or Finistere; and its vast dry moors and bleak plains are less relieved by verdant val-

leys and wooded slopes than any other part of the province.

The character of its inhabitants seems to partake of an analogous nature. They have a less agreeable reputation than any other of the Bretons. They are said to be quarrelsome, cruel, fierce cherishers of long hatred, and of savage disposition.

"Le Morbihannais," says M. Souvestre, "est un Celte baptisé qui laisse entrevoir son origine bien plus clairement que tous les autres Bretons. Nulle part le culte des élémens et des génies de la mythologie druidique ne s'est plus evidemment conservé sous un léger déguisement chrétien. On y trouve encore les arbres à niches, les fontaines miraculeuses, les jeux gaulois, les pierres révérées. Il n'est point un seul des milles monuments druidiques répandus sur le sol Venete, devant lequel le Morbihannais ne se sente saisi d'un mouvement de respect et de religion."

It was among the still imperfectly christianized Celts of this district that Paganism found its last stronghold in Britanny;—a proof that the fierce dispositions and unkindly temperament of these people were more averse from, and opposed to, the mild and civilizing doctrines of Christianity, than those of the other tribes; as they are to the present day

less amenable to its precepts. It was among the peasants of Morbihan that the outrages and atrocities of Chouannerie were carried to their most violent excesses. It was in this department that the spirit of license and insubordination, generated by the insurrection organized for very different purposes, was the most difficult to put down, and that the movement had the most entirely degenerated into mere robbery and systematic brigandage.

It is in this department, also, that the ferocious game of "soule" has survived the softening and humanizing influences of improvement and religion. I was extremely anxious to meet with an opportunity of witnessing one of these remarkable games, if, indeed, a most desperate combat can be termed such; but I did not succeed in accomplishing my purpose. Upon one occasion I journeyed several leagues in order to be present on a certain day at a village, where I was told "a soule" was to take place. But I was disappointed; and had my trouble for nothing. In fact, these dangerous games have, even in Morbihan, become very rare; and I could not get any certain information of one all the time I was in Britanny.

The "soule" is a large ball of leather, filled with bran; and the victor of the game is he,

who, after a long day's struggling and fighting, remains in possession of the ball. The contest usually takes place between two neighbouring communes, or sometimes between a town and one of the rustic parishes around it. The ball is thrown among the combatants, and the possession of it is disputed in a melée of the most desperate description. It frequently occurs that eyes are thrust out, limbs broken, ribs fractured, and sometimes lives lost, in the violent and prolonged encounter. But the determined obstinacy with which the possession of the ball is disputed, is not the most dangerous character or worst consequence of these games. A blow may be inflicted in these melées, which, given at any other time, would lay the offender open to a charge of assassination. And they afford to the cruel and vindictive spirit of the Morbihannais a safe opportunity, often it is said resorted to, of wreaking a long-treasured revenge upon an individual enemy.

"Quel est celui," said an old "souleur" to M. Souvestre, "qui n'a pas quelqu'un à tuer?"

It is said, too, that the peasant of Morbihan does not confine himself to the use of the "penbas;" but is frequently ready upon small provocation to lay his hand upon his knife.

In short, the Morbihannais has a bad name among his brother Celts, and is disliked by both Léonard and Kernewote.

If all these circumstances were not sufficient to prove that from a very early period they have been a separate people—a distinct tribe of the original nation—the difference of their language might be added to the evidence. The Breton which they speak cannot be understood by the inhabitants of the other parts of the country; and Celtic scholars pronounce it much less pure than that spoken in the dioceses of St. Pol de Leon and Cornouaille. I believe that the Breton of the Léonais is considered the best, and is the most readily understood by our Cambrians.

The road from Rennes to L'Orient crosses the river Blavet at Hennebon, the name of which is said to be derived from the Breton words "Hen," "Pont," old bridge. In old books the name is always written "Hennebont." It is a small town, pleasantly situated in the valley of the Blavet, along whose banks in either direction an agreeable ramble may be enjoyed, but especially up the stream to the small but picturesque ruins of the abbey of Notre Dame de la Joie, a convent of Cistertian nuns, founded in 1252 by the Duchess Blanche de Champagne, the wife of Duke John I.

But the principal source of interest which Hennebon possesses is the remembrance of the part it played in the celebrated civil wars between John de Montfort and Charles de Blois, which desolated Britanny in the fourteenth century. This disastrous time is what historians, with a degree of absurdity and a perversion of common sense, which would be incredible if mankind had not been long used to it, term the brightest portion of Breton history. To those historians who make history little more than a blood-stained record of the calamities of nations, such periods certainly afford the most ample materials for their pen; and may thus be deemed by them as the brightest portion of their work.

Hennebon was among the towns which suffered most from the brightness of this period. It was thrice besieged during these wars, and was finally taken by assault after a long resistance by Duguesclin, who admitted to quarter the Bretons who were in the town, but butchered the whole of an English garrison, who held it for John de Montfort.

But the most memorable of the three sieges was that by the troops of Charles de Blois in 1341, assisted by a French army, against whose utmost efforts the heroic Jeanne de

Montfort successfully held the town till succoured by an English reinforcement commanded by Sir Walter Mauny. The whole history of this princess's heroic conduct in defence of the rights of her son, from the time that her husband was taken prisoner at Nantes, is full of interest, and it has been made the subject of an historical novel published in Paris in the year 1697. The novelist's version, however, is far inferior in spirit and animation to the graphic details and naïve simplicity of old Froissart, who winds up his account of the brave struggles of the heroine, all which were on the point of becoming vain, and the arrival of Sir Walter Mauny and his men in the nick of time, by remarking: — "Qui adonc vit la comtesse descendre du châtel à grand' chère et baiser messire Gautier de Mauny et ses compagnons, les uns après les autres, deux ou trois fois, bien put dire que c'etait une vaillante dame."

Of this castle, the scene of so many gallant actions, nought now remains but the principal gateway, and the two huge towers which flanked it, and which now serve as prisons for the town.

From Hennebon we walked five leagues in a north-easterly direction to Baud, the

chef-lieu of an inland canton in the department of Pontivy. It is a most miserable place, and it was with reluctance that we determined to pass the night in the only quarters which the town afforded. The night passed, however, without leaving us much the worse for the discomforts of it; and the next morning we set forth in search of the object which had induced us to tarry in this comfortless town.

This was a statue known by the peasants under the name of "groah goard," and by antiquaries under that of the Venus de Quinipily. We easily found our way to the ruins, or rather to the site, for scarcely any ruins remain of the chateau de Quinipily; and there, on a pedestal, in what was the court of the chateau, we found the figure in question. It is the statue of a female in an upright position, naked, with the exception of a stole, which descends from her neck in front of her body down to the legs. She has also a fillet around her head, on the front of which are inscribed the letters J. I. T. In front of the pedestal is a large stone vessel of an oblong form, terminating at one end in a curve. It is about eight feet long, by five broad, and four deep. Both this and the statue are of granite. The latter is executed in an ex-

tremely rude manner. The body is very thick and clumsy, the face broad and coarse, and the features flat. On the pedestal are four Latin inscriptions.

The first runs thus:—

"VENERI VICTRICI VOTA C. I. C."

The second:

"C. CÆSAR GALLIA TOTA SUBACTA, DICTATORIS NOMINE INDE INDE CAPTO. AD BRITANNIAM TRANSGRESSUS, NON SEIPSUM TANTUM SED PATRIAM VICTOR CORONAVIT."

The third:—

"VENUS ARMORICORUM ORACULUM DUCE IULIO C. C. CLAUDIO MARCELLO ET L. CORNELIO LENTULO COSS. AB. V. C. DCCV."

The fourth:—

"P. COMES DE LANNION, PAGANORUM HOC NUMEN, POPULIS HUC USQUE VENERABILE, SUPERSTITIONI ERIPUIT; IDEMQUE HOC IN LOCO JUSSIT COLLOCARI ANNO DOMINI 1696."

Such is the appearance of this mysterious statue, as it may now be seen near Baud. A few more facts may be stated respecting it with equal certainty.

Previous to its removal into its present position by the Count de Lannion in 1696, it stood on a hill near Biluzy, overlooking the river Blavet. It was there an object of the greatest veneration — and even worship — to the peasants. They had many superstitions attached to it. The sick were supposed to be cured by touching it. Offerings were

made to it. Women on their recovery after childbirth went to bathe themselves in the basin in front of the statue. The most indecent and obscene rites were on other occasions practised there.

In 1671 some missionary priests, who happened to be at Baud, scandalized at this flagrant idolatry, persuaded Claude count of Lannion to cause the statue to be thrown from its pedestal, and rolled from the hill on which it stood into the river below. The peasants were extremely enraged at this; and the bad harvests which chanced to follow the event were of course looked on as a manifest proof of the anger of the goddess. So they assembled in great numbers, and, spite of all the opposition that could be made to them, fished up their goddess from the stream, and re-established her on her pedestal.

Some years after this, in 1696, the Bishop of Vannes, anxious to root out the Paganism which thus continued in the midst of his diocese up to the end of the seventeenth century, requested Peter count of Lannion, son of the above Claude, to destroy the object of the people's idolatry. Peter, however, who was a man of letters and a bit of an antiquary,

was unwilling to destroy so curious a relic of antiquity, and contented himself with removing it into the courtyard of his chateau of Quinipily. This was not effected without much difficulty. The peasants again assembled in great numbers to protect their divinity, and her removal was not accomplished without a battle between them and the soldiers of the governor of the province.

The statue, however, was eventually established in its present position, and Peter de Lannion then caused the above inscriptions to be cut on the pedestal.

Here ends all that can be told with certainty respecting this interesting figure. And here consequently begins the interminable series of fierce disputes, learned discussions, and ingenious conjectures among the antiquaries of the province. Some think it the work of Egyptian artists. Others attribute it, as did Peter of Lannion, to the Romans, and call it a Venus. Others, again, among whom is M. de Freminville, consider it an Isis; and think that it was the work of native artists, after the period of the Roman invasion. In short, the doctors most irreconcilably disagree; and the goddess her-

self, who alone knows the truth of the matter, pertinaciously refuses to throw any light upon the subject.

As soon as we had satisfied our curiosity with examining this mysterious statue, we turned southwards, and set off to walk to Auray, a distance of about five or six leagues.

The first part of our walk was prettier than any thing we had yet seen in Morbihan. We passed through the little village of Camors, near which there is a good deal of wood, an agreeable variation from the monotony of dreary arid plains, so frequent in this department. Towards Pluvigner, however, the woodland country ceases; and between that little bourg and Auray we passed over a plain, remarkable for a singular superstition attached to it by the peasants.

It seems that during the wars of the fourteenth century, between Charles de Blois and John de Montfort, an unusually murtherous engagement took place on this spot. The local tradition of the inhabitants asserts that several hundreds of men fell, and lie buried beneath the unconsecrated soil; and their statement is confirmed by the fact, that bones, arms, and all the usual relics of

a battle-field have frequently been found there.

But what avails a grave in unhallowed soil! Neither heaven will receive, nor earth retain, the troubled ghosts of those who die unshriven; and whose souls, thus unannealed, pass to their immortality unsped by candle, book, or passing-bell, and unblessed by holy words of priest. The spirits, therefore, of the unfortunates who fell that fatal day on this dreary plain, are doomed there to remain, restless and weary with the wanderings of ages, until the judgment-day shall award to each his final destiny. And it is said that at the most witching hour of night — at the hour when graves give up their dead — each hapless ghost is waked from his unblest repose, and condemned to wander over the melancholy plain, which was at once his death-bed and his grave.

Thus, at that solitary hour, when in fields uncursed by deeds of blood all is still, the plain of Pluvigner is peopled with thronging ghosts; and woe betide the mortal man who then finds himself abroad upon that fatal field. The spirits are passing in all directions, invisible, yet not unheard. For, as the night-wind sweeps across the plain, low, dis-

mal moanings and long cadences of wailing, as of suffering beings, are borne upon the blast; and sometimes, too, if the gale be boisterous, a hissing sound has been heard, caused by the passage of a spirit, as it flew along at speed before the wind.

Nought may change or interrupt their course. In direct lines, from end to end of the plain, they flit; and the living thing that encounters them in their destined track dies ere the next sun goes down. Not more surely fatal is it to stand in the path of a menhir, when at midnight it goes down to the river to drink—and what Morbihan peasant knows not the danger of that?—than to meet in the line of its unbending course a spirit on the plain of Pluvigner.

Of course, the fatal spot is shunned; and few are they who would venture to cross it after nightfall, if sober. But there are instances on record of those, who, returning late from market, have ventured to brave its mysterious dangers, having been stricken to the ground by no visible hand, and having died within the appointed time.

We crossed it, however, in safety; and, reaching Auray in good time for supper, found very tolerable accommodations at the

" Hôtel de Pavilion en haut." There used, I was told, to exist in this town two rival inns, called the " Hôtel de Paradis," and the " Hôtel de l'Enfer." But they are no longer to be found there.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Auray — Accommodations — Carnac — Druidical Remains — Picturesque Superstitions — Hypotheses respecting Carnac — Walk to Locmariaker — Arrest — Druidical Monuments — Municipal Wisdom — Picturesque Figure — Story of the Seaweed gatherers — Vannes — Excursions thence — Sucinio — Elven — St. Gildas — Grand Mont — Journey home — Conclusion.

Auray is a very convenient place of head-quarters, from which several interesting excursions may be made. The inn, too, there is a better one than the generality of Breton hostelries. The fact is, that mine hostess, the notable landlady of the "Pavilion en haut," is more accustomed to see and receive strangers than most of her fellows in the province. For many tourists come to Auray to visit the celebrated Druidical remains of Carnac, and the not less though far differently celebrated Quiberon.

These two objects of curiosity seem to have formed an exception to the almost total neglect of this interesting country. I suppose that the exclusive and distinguished honour

paid to Carnac arises from its having been especially mentioned by Caylus. But though it is certainly the most extensive Druidical monument in Britanny, in point of space, yet there are many others which no one ever dreams of visiting, quite as interesting, and more perfect.

On the morning after our arrival at Auray, we set off early, with the intention of visiting Carnac, as well as several other Druidical monuments in the neighbourhood. In no part of the province do these exist in greater number than in the immediate vicinity of the Morbihan, or "little sea," described in the last chapter. They are found there of all the various kinds which have been observed to have been left by the Druids, menhirs, cromlechs, barrows, dolmens, &c.

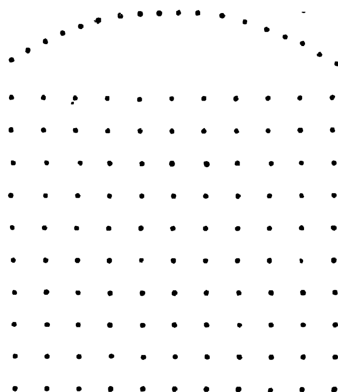
Respecting this district, also, the same remark may be made which suggested itself to me upon another occasion, viz: that the superstitions and supernatural tales of the peasants are always numerous in districts where Druidical remains abound. A thousand wild legions are current thoughout this region in connection with almost every locality.

There is not a peasant of Carnac who would not swear, that in their churchyard, at midnight, the tombs are open, the church is lit up, and

that thousands of skeletons are on their knees, listening to Death, clad in the garments of the priest, who preaches to them from the pulpit. There are many inhabitants of Carnac alive at the present day, who can testify that when the sky is clear, and the moon has been sinking behind the nave of the church, they have seen the lights of the ghastly congregation glancing from the windows; and, on quiet nights, they have distinctly heard the confused and monotonous sound of the preacher's voice, as he continued his long sermon, in tones not unlike the plashing of the tide on the neighbouring beach.

It was still early in the morning when we arrived on the field of Carnac. The petrified army—for such indeed might these stones be fancied—stood around us on every side, in all their grotesque variety of size and form; and it was impossible to doubt that we had reached the strange scene we sought. But at first we could not perceive any order in the position of the stones; nor were we at all able justly to appreciate their numbers. But, on mounting a considerable knoll which overlooks the plain, we were able after a while to catch an intelligible view of the general plan. Not that the whole of the space covered by the stones can be seen from any one spot;

but the disposition of them in rows becomes apparent. A great number of the stones have been thrown down, and used for modern buildings, so that the lines are in many places broken; but it is always possible for the eye to recover the trace of them again, after a little interval. It is said that, some years ago, the number of stones amounted to upwards of four thousand. There are now remaining, according to M. de Freminville, about twelve hundred, forming eleven lines, at the end of which there is a semicircle of eighteen stones, whose two ends join to the two outside rows in this form.



What the object or the nature of this colossal monument was, who shall say? It has even been doubted—though I cannot

but think unreasonably — who its authors were. There have not been antiquaries wanting to attribute them both to the Romans and to the Phenicians. But all we know of the constructions and habits of the Romans tend to put the possibility of their having raised these stones quite out of the question.

M. Sauvagère, who attributes them to this people, thinks that the plain of Carnac was a camp, and that the stones were raised *to keep the wind from the tents!* A stone of eighty thousand pounds weight — and some of those at Carnac are estimated to weigh so much — set up on end to keep the wind off! Even the Romans did not do things in that style.

What absurdities an antiquary hard pushed for an explanation will set forth and maintain, rather than admit that he knows nothing about the matter!

As for the Phenicians, there is not a shadow of a reason for believing that they ever came into Britanny.

Every thing tends to favour the belief that these stones are to be attributed to the same extraordinary people, to whose labour so many similar monuments have ever been ascribed. The purpose for which they were raised is more mysterious.

We pursued our walk, after leaving Carnac,

along a wild and deeply indented shore, passed the river, or rather estuary, of Croch, in the boat belonging to a coast-guard station, and thence continued along the shore towards Locmariaker. A little farther on we fell in with a solitary douanier, who arrested us, and took us to his officer, a sous lieutenant, residing in a solitary, miserable hovel, consisting of one entirely unfurnished room, to the roof of which a hammock was slung. As it happened—not by our own fault, but by that of the authorities at Havre, who told us it was sufficient—we had but one passport between us. The sous-lieutenant decided that this was not "en régle," and that it was his duty to take us before the nearest mayor as vagabonds and suspicious characters. Accordingly, he accompanied us himself to Locmariaker, conversing all the time with perfect civility, and even going somewhat out of the way to shew us a most magnificent dolmen—the largest I ever saw.

When we reached Locmariaker we were marched up stairs into a garret, where we found his worship, the mayor, lying on his back on a bed, and reading a novel of Paul de Kock. He got up, however, and shook himself, when we entered his garret; and, having learned the state of the case from our captor,

and perused very carefully and deliberately the one passport we possessed, and heard us three times declare, in answer to as many interrogatories, that we had no other, he said it was a "facheuse affaire," told the officer that he had done his duty in a praiseworthy manner, and dismissed us for the present, with the remark that his decision required some deliberation, and an injunction to return to him before we left Locmariaker; which he secured our doing by retaining our one passport.

The name Locmaria — locus Marice — so frequent in Lower Britanny, proves, that the Romans were there long enough, at least, to leave behind them portions of their language as a souvenir; and it is remarkable that the natives should have, in many cases, naturalized the name by adding to it, as a termination, the Celtic word, "Ker," the same as the Cambrian "Caer," which, in this instance, is redundant, as Ker signifies much the same as "locus."

I think I have before remarked that the Druids appear always to have selected, as the scenes of the mysterious rites of their esoteric worship, the most isolated and inaccessible spots. At least, the situations in which the greatest abundance of their monuments are found seem to lead to this conclusion;

and the position of Carnac and Locmariaker, and of the numerous other spots on the shores of the Morbihan, where Druidical remains are found, is an additional proof of the correctness of the supposition. The coast of this district is so deeply indented with wide estuaries, and so thinly inhabited, even at the present day, in consequence of the poorness of the soil, and the rugged nature of the moors, which in a great measure cover its surface, that the remote corners of its promontories and peninsulas afforded, in an eminent degree, the required qualities of seclusion and difficulty of access. Accordingly, the neighbourhood is one of those most thickly strewn with Druidical remains of various descriptions.

We visited a great many of these; and having, moreover, sat for a good while on the summit of a large barrow on the shore, resting ourselves, and gazing at the motions of the fishing-boats in the bay, and the long distant line of the peninsula of Quiberon, it was late in the afternoon when we returned to the village, and sought another interview with the mayor. We were told that he was at the village cabaret; and there, sure enough, we found his worship munching an onion and some bread, and discussing a huge pitcher of cider. He

received us very civilly, having hit upon a notable way of disembarrassing himself of the business. He restored our passport, and, having ascertained that we were about to return to Auray, charged us to present ourselves before the mayor there, and tell him that we were travelling without passports.

I wonder whether he really expected that we should thus take ourselves up, and request to be imprisoned, according to his bidding.

It was very late, and quite dark when we returned to Auray. We had much difficulty in finding our way over the wild and scarcely cultivated district, which we had to cross. In the midst of a wide common we met a very old man — an exceedingly picturesque figure, with silver hair streaming down his back, and floating in the wind, and a long staff in his hand. We asked him our way; and, though he could speak nothing but Breton, succeeded in making him understand what we wanted. He pointed with his staff, and gave us a multitude of instructions, of which we could not understand a word. But we followed the direction he indicated; and, for a long while afterwards, on looking back, could see him, on the top of a barrow close to

the spot, which he had mounted for the purpose, making signs to us with his staff which way we ought to take.

His dim and shadowy figure, as seen in the rapidly fading twilight, might well have passed for the ghost of the ancient Celt, who slept beneath, come forth, according to the popular superstition, from his imperishable tomb, to look out from its elevation on the face of the surrounding country.

We passed another day at Auray, in whose immediate neighbourhood the banks of the river are pretty and romantic, and on the next set out for Vannes. We travelled in a little " voiture commissionare," in company with a young priest, who told us the following story of the rector of a neighbouring parish to his own. It produced so strong an impression on my companion, that he made it the subject of a drawing, from which the adjoining plate has been taken.

As on some of our own coasts, the peasants on the shores of Britanny are in the habit of gathering the seaweed which the ocean casts, in great abundance, upon the numerous rocky reefs of their rugged coast for manure. It is very valuable for this purpose, and the collecting and stacking it on shore forms an

important portion of the labours of the sea-side population.

A large party of peasants, consisting of all the members of more than one family, had gone for this purpose to some isolated rocks, at a little distance from the coast, in a boat, which they hoped to bring back loaded with the fertilizing "guemon," as the seaweed is termed. They safely reached the reef of rocks, secured their boat, and all hands were busily engaged in gathering the weed into heaps.

The morning had been a very fine one; but gradually the sky became overcast; and the poor seaweed gatherers might have perceived, had they been less intent upon their occupation, that it was high time for them to secure their retreat to land. The gathering storm, however, was neglected in their anxiety to collect a lading for their voyage home, till it burst in fury above their heads. And then, when they hastened to the spot at which their boat was left, they found that it had been carried away by the rapidly increasing violence of the surf.

The predicament in which they found themselves was a sufficiently unpleasant one, though less discouraging to beings of their

hardy habits, inured to suffering and privation of all kinds, than it would have been to others. It was, however, a miserable prospect, even for them, to pass the night fasting and shelterless beneath "the pelting of the pitiless storm." But they did not contemplate any worse misfortune than this, doubting not that the villagers, who knew of their expedition, would guess what had happened, and come for them in the morning.

The wretched night was at length passed. But the long expected dawn brought with it no mitigation of the weather. A tremendous sea was raging around them on all sides, and the sky shewed to their experienced eyes no indication of any coming change. Then, indeed, the horrors of their situation began to present themselves to their minds. For they feared that no boat on the coast would venture to sea in such weather.

Another dreadful four-and-twenty hours passed; and still the storm howled around the hapless group, and the sea roared with unmitigated fury. Famine stared them in the face, and fear began to assume the character of despair. In vain some of the now nearly exhausted party continued to look out, through the drifting mist which lay upon the surface

of the sea, from the highest point of the rock, in agonizing, yet almost hopeless, anxiety. The darkness of a third night closed around them. No help arrived, and they thought, with the bitterness of despair, of those who were leaving them thus to perish without an attempt to save them.

In the mean time the inhabitants of the village were far from forgetful of the dreadful situation of their unfortunate neighbours, the circumstances of whose disaster were but too easily divined. A village consultation was held, and the necessity of doing something for the rescue of their comrades was insisted on by all; but none would volunteer to take upon themselves the great danger of the attempt. The boldest sailors declared that no boat could live in such a sea.

While the villagers were thus coming to the conclusion that any endeavour to reach the rock must be hopeless, the good rector of the parish had been engaged in collecting together as large and efficient quantity of provisions and restoratives as his own and his parishioners' limited means would supply. But when he joined the anxious group on the beach, and intimated to them that his preparations were concluded, he found that all

hope had been unanimously abandoned ; and his utmost eloquence failed to arouse any energy in the little circle, among whom fear had already become contagious.

As soon as he perceived that the assembly had come to the resolution of abandoning the attempt, the good man was not long in forming his own.

He upbraided none. All there were husbands, fathers, sons, or brothers. But he was alone in the world, and knew no ties but those of his duty. And that he conceived called upon him at all hazards to attempt the rescue of his unhappy parishioners, who were threatened with a death not only most awful in itself, but one deprived of the inestimable religious consolation and benefit which it was his business to afford.

He declared, therefore, his intention to be himself the bearer of the provisions to the unfortunates on the rock. And, despite the earnest dissuasions of the crowd, he stepped alone into the boat, which was deemed most likely to accomplish the passage, and, charging all present to pray for the success of his enterprise, was pushed off into the boiling surf by his shamed but still fear-bound parishioners.



Drawn and Etched by J. Martin

The priest accomplished in safety the voyage, which the most practised boatmen of the coast had feared to undertake. His reception by the starving and now utterly hope-abandoned crew on the rocks may be easily conceived. The immediate relief from the pangs of famine, and the re-opened prospect of life and safety, converted into a period of thankfulness and rejoicing the hours which yet remained, before they could safely leave the place of their long imprisonment. This they were happily able to do on the following day. And the triumphant return of the heroic priest, thus bringing with him his stray sheep, will be remembered in the parish long after he and his generation shall have slept beneath the sod of their obscure " inglorious" churchyard.

We arrived at Vannes in time for the table d'hôte at the Hôtel de Commerce, which, on the strength of Vannes being the capital of the department, was served at five o'clock. We found the inn a tolerably good one; but all the charges were higher than we had been accustomed to find them in Finistere. We remained at Vannes several days, making a variety of excursions in the neighbourhood;—to the fine and well preserved remains of the

chateau of Sucinio, built in 1260, by John the Red, Duke of Britanny;—to the more ruined but perhaps more interesting Elven, whose splendid tower, once the prison of him, who afterwards became an English king, Henry VII., still remains a chef-d'œuvre and a triumph of the castellated architecture of the middle ages;—to St. Gildas in the extremity of the peninsula of Rhuis, the barren and storm-beaten spot, where Abelard vainly endeavoured to maintain his rule over his rebellious monks;—to Grand Mont, not far from the same spot, an antiquity, which was such when the time-eaten walls of St. Gildas were raised,—the colossal time-defying tomb of one man, which it must have cost the labour of a nation to raise;—and to several other spots of minor interest.

Those, whose curiosity is excited by these mysterious works, in which alone we can read the history of the people who raised them, will be interested by hearing that a society of antiquaries of Vannes have obtained permission to open this enormous barrow; and the work was about to be commenced almost immediately after our departure from the neighbourhood.

From Vannes we began our journey home-

wards, by Ploermel, the curious bas-reliefs of whose church are worth seeing—Rennes, an almost entirely new town, the greatest part of it having been burnt down some years ago—Fougères, whose ruined castle and extremely beautiful scenery must at least be mentioned—and thence to Caen. A pretty miniature steamer, the "Calvados," carried us thence to Havre; whence the "Monarch" bore us, in twelve hours, to Southampton.

Thus our "Summer in Britanny" was brought to a conclusion; and a most enjoyable one had it been. I can hardly hope that I have succeeded in conveying to the reader the impressions I received from all that I saw, as vividly as my own mind received them from the objects themselves;—

"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
"Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus"—

nor can I flatter myself that I have laid before the reader so complete a picture of the country and its highly interesting inhabitants as I might, perhaps, have done, could I have ventured to ask the attention of the public to a more voluminous work. But if I have succeeded in raising the curiosity of my readers respecting a country, which, amid the ubi-

quitous travelling of the day, has been very undeservedly neglected, I hope that some among them may be induced to undertake a trip so easily accomplished. Should any feel inclined to do so, I think I may venture to promise them—always supposing that a little roughing is no insuperable objection—a very pleasant summer's ramble.

THE END.

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